

Cuba posting for British police in war on drugs

Two Scotland Yard officers are going to Cuba as part of an offensive to close down drug smuggling routes through the Caribbean to Britain, Home Office minister Tom Sackville announced yesterday.

In a separate move, the Foreign Office has also announced that it is planning to take new powers to crack down on money laundering in the five Caribbean dependent territories.

Mr Sackville, who speaks Spanish, agreed to send the police officers after a meeting with President Fidel Castro, the revolutionary leader, in Cuba last month, where he signed a Customs and Excise co-operation pact.

"I had a hunch that Cuba was straight and they were making an effort to tackle the drugs problem," the Home Office minister told *The Independent*.

"They are a key player in the transit, both in airports and in

Joint initiative aims to check Caribbean smuggling route. Colin Brown reports

marine transport, and we need to work as close as possible with them to combat the trafficking."

Mr Sackville, only the second minister in 25 years to visit Cuba – the first was Ian Taylor, the trade and industry minister – came back convinced that Cuba was committed to combating the drugs trade and could be trusted with intelligence sharing.

Cuba is being targeted by the drugs barons in South America because its waters are barred to the US Coastguard. Drugs are dropped off by light aircraft, and picked up from the water to be shipped on to Europe through Cuban ports.

Britain was wary of exchanging intelligence with some other countries in the area, where ministers and officials can be corrupted by the huge

volume of money associated with drugs. The Cuban leader made little small talk in their meeting, but in a lengthy speech denounced drug trafficking as a crime against the revolution, and committed his authorities to co-operating with British police and customs officers to prevent Cuba being used for the transfer of drugs from Colombia to Europe.

British intelligence helped in the seizure by the US Coastguard of a massive shipment of six tons of cocaine via Cuba. In a breakthrough in US-Cuban relations, Cuban officials are ready to testify against the smugglers in a trial early in the new year in the United States.

But the British government also fears that not enough is being done to combat the laundering of the money from the drugs trade through offshore banks in Caribbean countries. Britain has already introduced its own legislation to extend the powers of seizure and disclosure for bank accounts believed to be used in money laundering.

Foreign Office sources yesterday confirmed that Britain is considering extending its powers to introduce the same anti-laundering measures in the five dependent territories – the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Montserrat, and the British Virgin Islands.

The Cayman Islands, world-famous for its banking, and Bermuda have already begun action against money laundering through their banks. But the Government fears some of the other islands need to take more action.

The aim is to persuade the countries to carry out action voluntarily. It will be one of the priorities for the new governor of the Turks and Caicos, John Kelly, an expert on the Caribbean, who took over recently from Martin Bourke.



Common purpose: Tom Sackville meeting President Fidel Castro during his visit to Cuba last month.

Smugglers look east in move to establish new cocaine route

Matthew Brace

The South American drug cartels are spreading their smuggling operations from Central America and the western Caribbean to the 29 countries of the eastern Caribbean stretching from Surinam to the British Virgin Islands.

Tightened security in the established cocaine conduit areas have forced the drug cartels to change tack and now it is feared they will exploit the eastern Caribbean's comparative unfamiliarity with drug smuggling by flooding the new route with drugs for Britain, the rest of Europe and the United States.

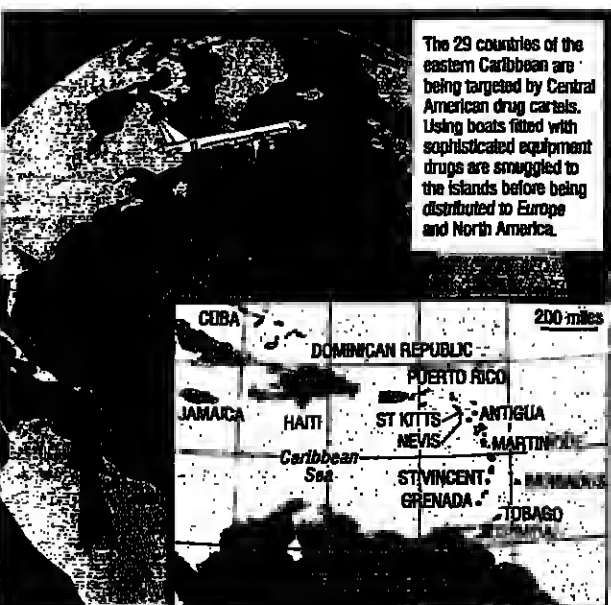
Evidence from the United Nations Drug Control Programme, based in Barbados and funded chiefly by the British government, shows that 180 tonnes of cocaine were smuggled into Europe from South America via the eastern Caribbean this year – roughly 50 kilos a day. About 60 per cent came via Britain, arriving on cargo ships and passenger flights.

As much as nine-fifths of the Europe-bound total is estimated to have travelled with couriers – sometimes holidaymakers – and it is believed there could be as many as three cocaine runs a week to Britain.

Many more British holidaymakers are taking advantage of lower holiday prices in the Caribbean and despite a graphic film now showing on flights from the UK warning of the penalties of drug smuggling, several are ignoring the risks and carrying consignments of cocaine back to the UK.

The director of the UN programme in Barbados, Dr Sandro Calvani, said the narcotics trade is like a balloon.

"You squeeze it here and it pops out over there. As their routes have been closed down the narco-traffickers have been pushed further and further east to these islands are now beginning to see a lot more drug activity," he said. He added that 1997 will be a crucial year in the fight against trafficking which would only be won if all the east-



The 29 countries of the eastern Caribbean are being targeted by Central American drug cartels. Using boats fitted with sophisticated equipment drugs are smuggled to the islands before being distributed to Europe and North America.

ern Caribbean nations worked together to stifle the threat. With limited resources, however, and some countries only having one or two patrol boats to try to intercept the powerful speedboats of the smugglers, they seem outgunned.

'The traffickers are eager for political power in order to dictate the rules of the game'

Barbados is a prime target for the traffickers. As the Caribbean's most easterly outpost with arguably the best air and sea freight facilities in the region and close trade links with Britain, it serves their purpose well. Despite the island having some of the toughest drug penalties in the region, 827 drug cases were recorded up to the end of October 1996, against 745 cases for the entire year 1995. Twelve tonnes of co-

caine found in a cargo ship in Spain last month were traced back to the island and in London in December 1994, £1m worth of cocaine was seized on a British Airways flight from the island.

Other islands in the Leeward and Windward chain are also at risk. A recent Internet advertisement promoted Antiguan money-laundering services by promising: "We handle cash derived from ANY activity." And a string of recent murders and disappearances in St Kitts was also linked with trafficking.

An EU report on the current crisis highlighted the islands' vulnerability and warned that it posed a threat to the region's democracy. Weak economies, underpaid and demoralised officials and low counter-narcotics expenditure were laying eastern Caribbean states wide open to the traffickers.

Dr Calvani fears that the drug barons may soon infiltrate the political arena. "Whereas traffickers in the past have been interested solely in the business side of their trade, now they are also eager for political power," he said. "They want to gain this power in order to dictate the rules of the game."

Years of trauma for rape victims

A woman and her nine-year-old daughter raped by an man who threatened them with a knife will never recover from their ordeal, a child psychologist said last night.

Despite years of therapy, the 53-year-old woman and her child – assaulted in the early hours of Boxing Day as they slept in a north London ground-floor flat – would not escape their "intense violation", according to Professor Joan Freeman, of Middlesex University. "This will never leave them for the rest of their lives. They will never get over it. I don't think you can ever be as you were before. You have changed and it will always be there. It's not a bad cold you get over. It becomes a part of you, an experience as traumatic as this," the professor added.

Professor Freeman said the mother – who, with her daughter, was staying with a relative in Northolt for Christmas – would probably be more traumatised than the young girl.

"I think the girl stands a better chance because she's only nine and, without being dismissive, children are remarkably resilient."

"But for the mother, because she was in a position of responsibility, it will be worse for her. She's got to deal with the violation of herself and of her daughter and all that guilt."

Professor Freeman, who said the couple would need at least a year to come to terms with their ordeal and might need psychotherapy every day, added: "The mother will also have a lot of guilt to deal with. She will be guilty for herself and guilty for the child."

She added that the nine-year-old's success in coming to terms with the ordeal depended on her level of security before the assault. "How well she will get over it depends on where she started from."

Police are looking for a man said to be in his early 20s, between 5ft 11ins and 6ft tall, very thin, with thin fingers, clean-shaven and with chiselled features.

Against all odds: Andrew Robinson, who suffers from a rare form of autism, sits surrounded by his books; this year he beat thousands of students to medals from the country's largest A-level examination board Photograph: News Team



Autistic boy top of the class

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

A student born with a rare form of autism which rules out everyday tasks such as making a cup of tea, has beaten thousands of other teenagers to score among the country's top A-level results.

Nineteen-year-old Andrew Robinson celebrated Christmas with three medals from the country's largest A-level exam board – one for gaining the highest mark nationally in general studies and the others for coming within the top five candidates in two other subjects.

The achievements mark a milestone in an educational career which saw him removed from junior school at seven. The boy who couldn't mix with his classmates left specialists divided – some thought he was gifted while others saw bad behaviour.

Six years later, Andrew was diagnosed as suffering from Asperger's syndrome, a little-understood form of autism causing obsessional behaviour and difficulties with relationships. Yet the condition also revealed itself in a startling academic ability. With the help of 15 hours a week home tuition, he gained five GCSEs and a sixth-form place at the tertiary college near his Derby home, setting him on the path to the awards from the Associated Examining Board.

Now in the first year of a degree in politics at Nottingham University, Andrew said: "Asperger's has given me abilities as well as disabilities."

Among his strengths are tremendous powers of critical analysis. But any subject involving sheer description or learning by rote is out of reach, ruling out maths, technology or languages.

Andrew's parents face the reality of a disorder which saw their son score highest among more than 18,000 candidates, yet which means they must continue to care for him.

His father, Graham, speaks of Andrew's "amazing ability to focus... But that tunnel vision is part of the problem – he can tell you all about Karl Marx but he can't make a cup of tea."

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Charles backs multi-million faith centre

Louise Jury

A City highflier's dream of creating a £120m Christian centre in London for the Millennium will move closer towards becoming reality next month.

The Millennium Commission is due to decide whether to back merchant banker Ken Costa's vision of a "thriving, ecumenical Christian community" on the south bank of the Thames.

The scheme would transform a nine-acre site near Battersea power station into a giant "village" featuring a 10,000-seat church, a base for charities working with the poor, sick and disadvantaged and short-stay accommodation for young people.

The USIT youth and student travel company would use the budget hotel and has pledged £50 million to match £50 million requested from the Millennium Commission.

If the Commission gives its backing, a planning application would be presented within weeks. Mr Costa and his church, the Holy Trinity Brompton in Knightsbridge, London, is preparing to place an option to secure the nine-acre site by the end of January.

It is confident of raising the remaining £20 million needed from corporate and private sponsors.

Mark Elsdon-Dew, the project spokesman, said yesterday: "We're very excited by it. We want it to be the kind of place which people in London can be proud of."

Ken Costa, 46, vice chairman of merchant bankers SBC Warburg, and a church warden and lay preacher at Holy Trinity Brompton, the largest Anglican church in Britain, has harboured a vision of such a centre for some time, Mr Elsdon-Dew said.

But it is only in the last year that feasibility studies and plans have been drawn up and a charitable trust, Millennium Village, formed to spearhead development. Mr Costa, who has provided significant financial support, is its chairman.

The influential vicar of Holy Trinity, the Rev Sandy Millar, has secured extensive church backing. The Archbishop of

Canterbury, other leading Anglican churchmen, the Baptist and Methodist churches and Cardinal Hume, leader of the Roman Catholic church in England and Wales, have all expressed keen interest.

Prince Charles's private office is acting as consultant. Having previously called for a more spiritual approach to the Millennium celebrations, the Prince is understood to see the potential union in the scheme of two of his greatest interests - spiritual exploration and British architecture.

His office said: "The Prince welcomes the idea of building an ecumenical Christian centre - to coincide with the beginning of the Third Millennium."

Mr Costa said: "Millennium Village is a national celebration of the Christian millennium, demonstrating the links between belief and social action in the community."

"We are also delighted to be working with the Prince of Wales' Projects Office to ensure that Millennium Village expresses architecturally this exciting vision of unity and reconciliation in the nation."



Room with a view: A rambling taking in the scenery at Pwllheli Bay on the Gower peninsula in South Wales

Photograph: Rob Stratton

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'Right to roam' campaign faces a tough climb

Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

The campaign for a public right to roam mountains and moorland is an unlikely one. It has been out of its place in the public mind since the 1930s - the time of mass trespasses on the Pennine moors. It calls for a "thorough review" and initiatives to "bring greater public access to both upland and lowland countryside in England and Wales in ways which are in keeping with the needs of land managers and wildlife conservation."

The BMC fears that defining open country could lead to climbers being barred from crags in lowland or cultivated areas in a "backlash" by landowners. Labour has limited open country to mountain and moorland; the BMC wants to add cliff and foreshore; and the RA would like to go further and include downland and forests.

A paper prepared earlier this year by Jeremy Barlow, the BMC's access officer, warned that concentrating on improved access to target sites might be seen as "provocative" and as undermining the RA's attempt to get legislation.

David Beskin, the RA's assistant director, regretted what he saw as a shift in BMC policy over the last four years. "They're not interested in mountain walkers any more, just themselves and their friends who go climbing on individual crags. They seem happy to slip into the position as acting as the agent for restrictions. We're very sad about it," he said.

give these people the appearance of influence and respectability and they will be happy."

BMC and RA representatives attended the CLA's lavish Access 2000 conference last month, but only the ramblers' line that access to the countryside beyond public rights of way must be agreed voluntarily and managed.

A draft of the charter does not rule out legislation but argues that access has become a much more complex issue since the 1930s - the time of mass trespasses on the Pennine moors. It calls for a "thorough review" and initiatives to "bring greater public access to both upland and lowland countryside in England and Wales in ways which are in keeping with the needs of land managers and wildlife conservation."

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DAILY POEM

Elvis

By Stephen Knight

He's out there somewhere, in the dark - a pair of oil-stained overalls, a monkey wrench. When drivers park to stretch their legs and scratch their balls

he appears with a chamois leather in a pail of suds. He doesn't pass the time of night, curse the weather nor laugh; he only cleans the glass.

Bored, tired from counting off the states they've spanned, they can't see how odd he is, the man who oover talks; the tubby, balding guy who waits for tips, then shrugs. The one who walks across the forecourt like a god.

This week and next, *The Independent* will be printing poems from the 10 volumes shortlisted for the 1996 T S Eliot Prize. The prize, set up by the Poetry Book Society in 1993, honours the year's best collection of new verse. It will be presented by Mrs Valerie Eliot on 13 January. "Elvis" comes from Stephen Knight's second collection, *Dream City Cinema*, published by Bloodaxe.

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Jp 1/10/96

Electronic curfew tags fail the test of crime

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

The Home Office was forced to put on a brave face yesterday after its own research showed that a quarter of the young criminals fitted with electronic tags in pilot schemes had breached their orders.

The study, published today, also reveals that each of the electronic monitoring orders are likely to be costing the taxpayer more than four times the cost of putting the offenders on probation.

The report examines the first full year of trial schemes into the use of the American-style tags in Greater

Manchester, Norfolk and Berkshire which began in July 1995, under which courts can impose curfew orders on offenders aged 16 and over restricting their liberty from between two and 12 hours a day for up to six months.

Of the 83 tagged, mostly for dishonesty or possession of drugs, 19 either tore off their electronic bracelets – fitted either to the ankle or wrist – or committed other offences. Fifteen were subsequently re-sentenced to custody.

While just 236 young criminals have been tagged since the pilots began 18 months ago, with 91 still being monitored, Securicor Custom-

dial Services, the private security firm which monitors the schemes in Greater Manchester and Reading, Berkshire, claimed yesterday that the research had judged the US import a success.

But there was a lower-key response from Baroness Blatch, the Home Office minister, who said: "As the report makes clear, tagging can be a worthwhile community sentence. Tagging represents a useful additional sentence for courts."

Although the research, Curfew Orders with Electronic Monitoring, was never designed to specifically test whether tagging should be, or was being, used as an alternative to custody,

Lady Blatch added it was a "cost-effective" alternative to imprisonment and that the research had found that some magistrates viewed it as such.

This is in contradiction to the original intention that it was to be used as an addition to the existing range of community penalties, and lends weight to reports that some magistrates have been persuading potential taggers to accept monitoring or risk being sent to jail for petty offences that would not normally merit imprisonment.

Alongside the emerging policy vacuum over how tagging ought to be used, an analysis of a recent parliamentary answer reveals that

current costs are significantly higher than ministers may wish to admit. In what appears to be an attempt to massage the figures, the Home Office suggested yesterday that the cost of a tagging order was "estimated" at being slightly less than for an average probation order and less than half the cost of a custodial sentence of the same length.

Harry Fletcher, assistant general secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, said yesterday that the average cost of probation was £50 a week while prison cost £425 a week.

A parliamentary reply on 4 December from Baroness Blatch to

Lord Harris revealed that £2.4m had been spent on the experiment so far. Even excluding the £1.3m likely to have been spent on start-up costs, each order has probably cost in the region of £4,782.

Taking an average curfew order of four months, the weekly cost would be in the region of £367 a week. In fact, the Home Office cost "estimate" might only be feasible if the courts imposed some 15,000 tag orders a year – the level officials have suggested would be needed for private security firms to operate schemes profitably. According to reports from the pilot areas, Securicor staff have been called upon to perform a

range of support tasks, from the fetching of a prescription or a four-pack of lager during curfew hours to counselling an offender threatening suicide. The company later confirmed that the average number of offenders per member of staff was two.

Mr Fletcher said: "A study of just 83 people is too few to make an evaluation but I think this invalidates the whole project. This level of support simply would not be available if the scheme was extended nationally, which indicates that the rate of breaking of orders, which is already double that of probation, would go up, not down."

Living proof that Madam Tussaud's has a new model army

Clare Garner

It is not easy to capture the wit of the singer Jarvis Cocker in wax – or any other part of him for that matter. But the sculptors are giving it their best shot.

In Madam Tussaud's day wax works were fairly crude. Not now. Technological advances and increased attention to detail are leading to ever more life-like models worth £20,000 apiece. Subjects now spend up to six hours at several sittings to enable the sculpture to measure and mould to perfection. It is six months before a star is born. The Pulp singer is only three weeks in, but is already unmistakable. Eyes

part vacant, part soulful, enigmatic expression and slim limbs are taking shape. The effete pose was chosen by Jarvis himself, as were his clothes (black flares and Seventies jacket).

Stuart Williamson, 48, who together with the make-up team, has sculptured the waxworks for 17 years, said: "We put a lot more effort than we used to into making the models life-like. We take hundreds of measurements. We even get a sample of hair if they'll let us. We are meticulous about detail and the results are much better than they were 10 years ago." The uncanny lifelike model of the footballer Eric Cantona, unveiled earlier this year, is proof of this.

Julia Deane, 32, a hair and make-up artist, has seen many advances in colouring techniques since she joined Madam Tussaud's in central London 12 years ago. The transition from water colour to oil paint has been significant. "Water and wax don't mix well," she said. "It used to be impossible to get fine detail. There was one basic colour for the whole head. With oil, you can put in every little freckle, dot and vein. You can gradually build up the texture to create a three-dimensional look."

But the success of the make-up depends on the model. "If someone looks like the real person it is much easier to colour," she said. "I'm doing Meryl Streep at the moment. She paid a lot of attention to detail, so I'm not having to compensate for slight discrepancies."

Not every waxwork ages at the same rate. The Beatles still parade their Sixties style, but the Princess of Wales, like many of the royals, is constantly updated. Diana's latest look-



Image makers: Above, Jarvis Cocker takes shape in the hands of Madame Tussaud's artists. Right, the old-style Princess of Wales and her new model

Photographs: Andrew Buurman/Rex

like has been hailed as a triumph, a marked improvement on previous models. She originally gave one sitting before she was married and sculptors have since relied on photographs and measurements taken then. This year, however, she gave a fresh sitting.

The use of photography has also improved. "We stand the subject on a turntable and swing them round gently, taking photographs from every angle," Mr Williamson said. "We take pictures of their eyes and enlarge them 20 times to get every single detail."

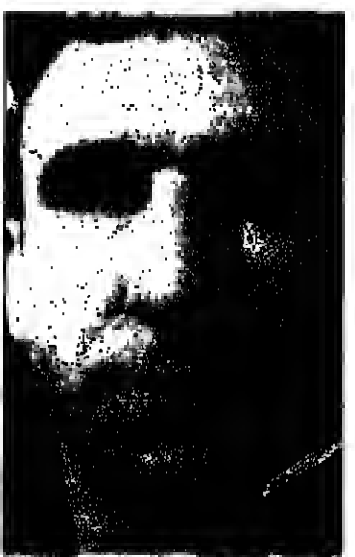
There are around 400 models on show at Madam Tussaud's and the

line-up is constantly reviewed. The Duchess of York bit the dust when her decree nisi came through earlier this year. At least she is intact – unlike the MP and former Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone and actor Charles Dancy, whose heads will go into cold storage while their bodies are recycled.

A temporary exit from the exhibition may also be caused by excessive public adulation. "Joanna Lumley [the actress] has to be taken out on a regular basis, because she is so popular," said Diane Robertson, a spokeswoman for Madam Tussaud's. "Her hands get scratched

from people holding them to take pictures... And then there's Naomi Campbell, men are all over her, getting their girlfriends to take pictures of them with her." The supermodel's image is now protected by a red rope to keep the crowds at bay.

Although skills and techniques have advanced, some models remain unchanged. Madam Tussaud herself worked without the aid of photography, oil paint or technological wizardry, and her final work, a self-portrait from 1842 when she was 81, is still on show. She stands centre stage in the exhibition which draws millions of visitors each year.



Footballer Eric Cantona, who joined the waxworks this year

Money pyramid set to beat the law at third attempt

Michael Streeter

A pyramid-style money-making scheme twice outlawed by the High Court is expected to be launched for the third time early in the new year.

Peter Reece, UK director of the organisation Titan, said he was "hopeful" that a pilot project – Titan Three – could be operating in Scotland shortly. "It will be to prove that the scheme really does work," he said.

He also confirmed that the economics professor, Patrick Minford, one of the so-called Six Wise Men who advise the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had completed a computer analysis of the Titan schemes and had concluded they were a legitimate business gamble. A copy of the report is believed to have gone to the Prime Minister's office.

The first Titan venture was hanned by the High Court last year, and lost an appeal to the Court of Appeal, after the Department of Trade and Industry successfully applied to have the scheme wound down. One judge described such ventures as "pernicious".

The DTI argued that such a business, which has no product and relies on investors involving family and friends to recoup their payments, are doomed to fail.

They also claim that between them thousands of investors lose millions of pounds in the money venture – though Titan say the losses only occurred because of the DTI's legal action.



Patrick Minford: Showed scheme was worth gamble

One told *The Independent*: "It is a rip-off and I'm afraid that some people fall for it."

However, Mr Reece, who brought the idea over from Holland after it originally started in Germany, said the notion that such a scheme was bound to fail as it ran out of investors was "absolute rubbish".

He said: "Getting a venture like this started is like flying an aeroplane. You take-off on full throttle but then you settle down to cruise. We can prove that the market will not saturate."

The news that Titan, which involves investors paying in up to £3,000, and then receiving commission for each new investor they introduce directly or indirectly, is to start trading again will dismay those who had their fingers burnt before the court action.

Mr Reece, whose organisation has already spent £1.7m in legal fees, said that supporters included the backbench Conservative MP Sir Michael Grynlls. Titan intended to take its case to the House of Lords and to the European Court of Justice if necessary.

Mr Reece said: "We would prefer to sit down and talk about the need for regulation, but if need be we will fight and we will win. This is a pioneering business. The DTI are going to lose this one."

However, at the end of January the new Trading Schemes Act becomes law, which will further restrict the way many network marketing systems can operate. It will also ban those schemes based solely on money-circulation which currently fall outside the scope of the Fair Trading Act.

Critics say the new act, introduced by the former minister Sir Nicholas Scott, is opaque and will effectively criminalise 300,000 people currently involved in legitimate network marketing.

Titan's lawyers say they will be seeking to make the Act non-applicable because it contravenes European Union law.

But a DTI spokesman said it was designed to protect the public from the "get rich quick schemes" which had increased in number in recent years.

Antibiotic claim gives hope to Gulf veterans

Ian Burrell

Scientists from the US Army are investigating claims that the illnesses of Gulf war veterans are caused by bacteria in the blood and can be cured by antibiotics. Garth Nicolson, a molecular biologist specialising in cancer research, claims to have successfully treated 55 out of 73 veterans with a six-week course of treatment.

Last week, after pressure by American politicians, the US Army agreed to study the research, which could mark a breakthrough in treating thousands of American and British veterans.

Dr Nicolson, who was head of cancer research at the University of Texas, detected micro-organisms called mycoplasma which were leaving the veterans with breathing difficulties, muscle weakness, depression and other symptoms.

His findings would explain why many veterans appear to have passed on symptoms to members of their families. Dr Nicolson, who did the work with his wife, Nancy, concluded that the bacteria were not caught in the desert but were passed to the troops via chemicals they were exposed to.

In a research paper he wrote: "We consider the most likely sources of potential chronic infectious agents to be the vaccines and Iraqi offensive chemical weapons."

He believes that the virulent mycoplasma had been genetically altered for use in biological weapons.

Last week Major-General

Leslie Barger, commander of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, said government and independent scientists would be brought together next month to determine how to study Dr Nicolson's research.

Larry Cammock, treasurer of the British Gulf Veterans Association, said: "It is about the most interesting conclusion that we have had... Maybe this will open the doors for long-term treatment for the lads."

Dr Nicolson said he found a genetically altered version of mycoplasma in the blood of half the several hundred sick veterans he has tested. Although mycoplasma infections are common and usually benign, Dr Nicolson said he had detected a particularly virulent strain.

The Nicolsms said they had successfully treated many of the veterans by giving them a course of doxycycline antibiotics. Dr Nicolson, who left the University of Texas to set up and become director of the non-profit-making Institute for Molecular Medicine in Irvine, California, has clashed with the Pentagon over the controversial course of his research.

Last week Donna Boltz, a Pentagon spokeswoman, was quick to warn that the government had not agreed to fund medical research into mycoplasma and veterans.

But Dr Nicolson's cause has been taken up by Congressman Norma Dicks, of Washington state, whose intervention led to last week's development.

Mr Dicks said: "We owe it to the people who are still ill... to look at this more thoroughly."

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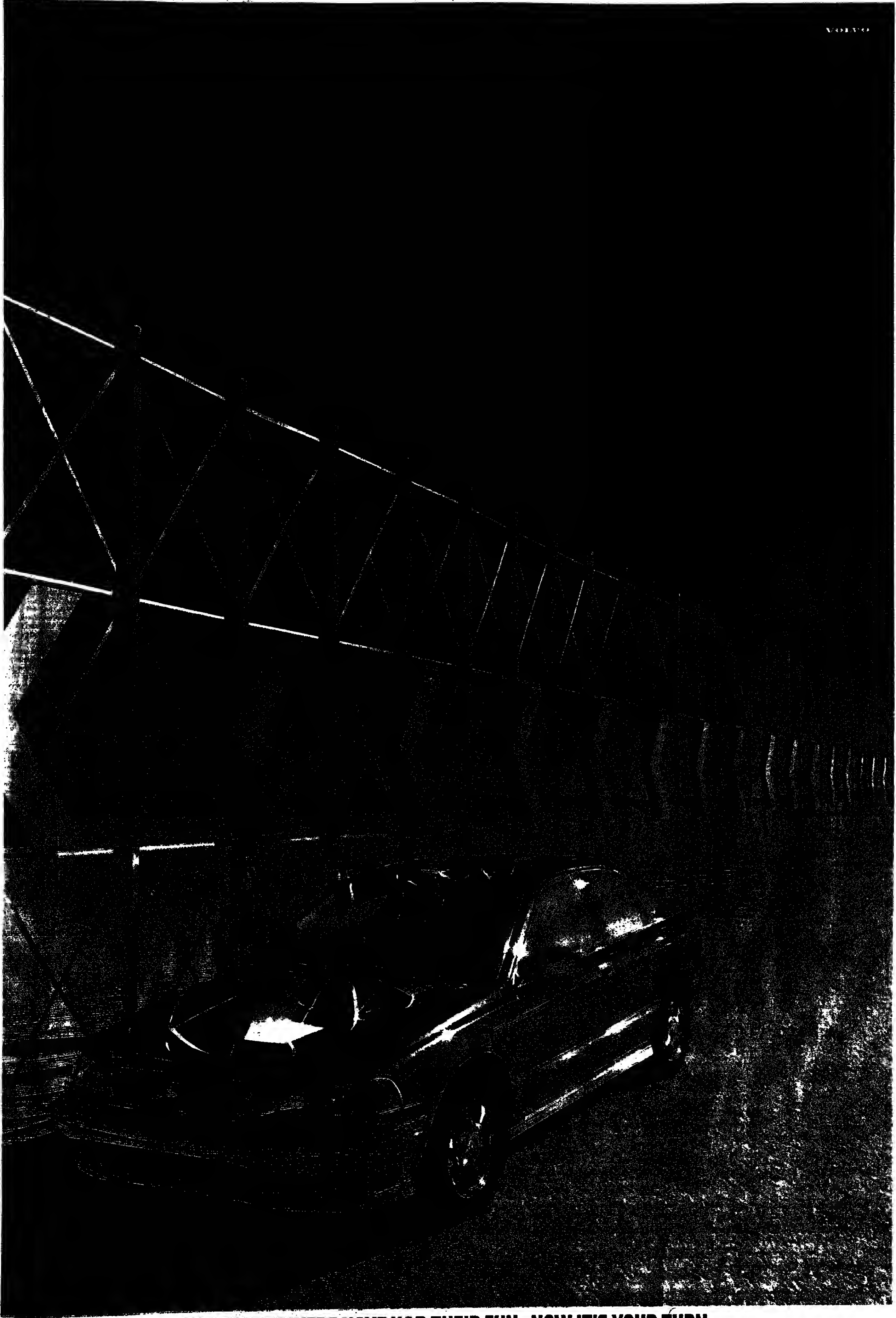
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China's new
gamblers
discover it's
easier to
speculate
than
accumulate

Photograph: Reuters

China says it remains committed to the expansion of the stockmarkets. But market regulators have set a deadline of 1 January for China's brokers to start doing more to teach their clients that markets have bears as well as bulls - just in case the past weeks have not pressed that message home.

A Rolls by any other name brings sweet success

are bought because they are expensive. How else can an average wannabe tycoon show that he has already made it? Only the seriously rich can afford to relax; they have nothing to prove. Some are even seen wearing Japanese watches. Those wanting to join their ranks have to be given face by showing they are in the big league in terms of spending power.

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Stephen Vines

Stephen Vines

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Peaceful end near for hostage crisis

Peruvian guerrillas agree to leave residence amid reports of US raid. Phil Davison reports

The Peruvian government and Tupac Amaru guerrillas holding 83 VIP hostages in the besieged Japanese ambassador's residence appeared to be moving towards a non-violent end to the two-week-old crisis yesterday.

After releasing a further 20 hostages on Saturday night, including 10 foreign ambassadors and 10 Japanese businessmen, the guerrillas said that they were willing to leave the residence peacefully "through dialogue".

They made no mention of their erstwhile key demand for the release of hundreds of jailed comrades, something President Alberto Fujimori has said is out of the question.

In a telephone call from Europe to Reuters News Agency in Lima, Tupac Amaru spokesman Isaac Velazco spoke yesterday of "an intermediate solution" which did not have to include the release of all Tupac Amaru prisoners.

Guerrilla leader Nestor Cerna's wife is said to be among the prisoners, serving a life term on terrorism charges.

On the government side, chief negotiator Domingo Palerm, Peru's Education Minister, who met Cerna in the besieged residence for the first time on Saturday, said there had been "advances towards a solution of this crisis".

He was commenting specifically on the release of the 20 hostages, which left the rebels with 500-plus still taken when they stormed a diplomatic cocktail party on 17 December.

The 20 or so guerrillas appear to be pruning their captives to a manageable number, per-

haps one or two busloads, with a view to leaving the building for Lima airport and on to a jungle hideout or perhaps exile in a country such as Cuba.

The guerrillas still hold those they consider their most valuable hostages - Peru's Foreign Minister, Francisco Tudela, senior police and military officers, Supreme Court judges, congressmen and Mr Fujimori's brother, Pedro.

The apparent softening of positions on both sides came amid reports that US SWAT assault team experts were advising their Peruvian counterparts on how a hostage-freeing raid might work.

Americans were also reported to be analysing conversations within the ambassador's residence, picked up by sensitive bugging devices outside.

President Fujimori has taken a tough line publicly but he is said by diplomats to be making concessions in the talks involving Mr Palermo.

The key mediator appears to be Peruvian Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani, from the city of Ayacucho, who has been visiting the besieged building every day since Christmas and appears to have defused the threat of a violent denouement.

In a communiqué read by a released hostage on Saturday night, the guerrillas criticised politicians and the media for billing their group as "a terrorist and genocidal band, which is absolutely false".

"Looking at the situation in the jails and the drama that the families of our imprisoned comrades have lived through, we think it will be understood that our petition should be heeded,



Liberated: Ahmad Mohdhar (right), the Malaysian ambassador to Peru, with his wife after his release by guerrillas on Saturday. Photograph: Reuters

and over time allow the achievement of an integral, lasting peace," the statement said.

That reflected earlier comments by Cerna that Tupac Amaru wants to

lay down its arms under an amnesty deal and then integrate itself into Peruvian politics as a populist party in support of the poor.

Many Peruvian intel-

lectuals say that the Christmas hostage crisis was an accident waiting to happen. As in Mexico and other Latin American countries, emphasis on free market economic

policies has brought investment but has widened the gap between rich and poor.

This explained the rise of the Zapatista guerrillas and the People's Revolu-

tionary Army (EPR) in Mexico in the last three years, the intellectuals claim.

Government attempts to mobilise Peruvians in anti-Tupac Amaru march-

es brought only a few thousand out on to the streets, while the majority of Peru's poor express sympathy with the guerrillas' goals, if not their methods.

Cabbage Patch doll 'eats' girls' hair

Greenville, South Carolina (AP) - In the third such incident since Christmas, a little girl's hair got caught in the mouth of a battery-powered doll that mimics eating. Three-year-old Carly Mize was left partly bald on Thursday when her hair was snagged by her doll and pulled out of her scalp.

The girl's mother, Tammy Mize of Easley, South Carolina, said: "When I picked Carly up, the doll was attached to the back of her head."

The Cabbage Patch Snack Time Kid doll, which is supposed to "eat" plastic chips or other fake food, has no on-off switch, and Mrs Mize said she tried to prise the doll off Carly's head with no success.

"It kept rolling her hair inside the head," she said. "It pulled her hair from the root. She completely bald all the way down the back of her head."

In another incident, a doll belonging to 7-year-old Sara Stevens of Griffith, Indiana, had to be taken apart when it chewed its way up her hair to her scalp. Sara's aunt, Kell Nagy, took 30 minutes to free the little girl's hair.



Snack time: The hair-eating Cabbage Patch doll

significant shorts

Pyongyang apologises for 'spy' sub

In its first official apology ever to its southern rival, North Korea expressed "deep regret" over sending a spy submarine into South Korea in September, which triggered a deadly manhunt. In a two-sentence apology the Communist state also promised to prevent similar incidents from recurring. The apology was seen as a major concession by North Korea, which regards the Seoul government as a US puppet. AP - Seoul

Strikes spread in S Korea

On the fourth day of South Korea's largest labour protest ever, 20,000 workers vowed to fight President Kim Young-sam's government, saying it threatened their jobs. About 373,000 workers have joined the strike at 700 work sites, union leaders said. Car and shipbuilding industries were hardest hit. Union leaders vowed to

continue the protests until the end of January. AP - Seoul

Chechnya pull-out

The last Russian combat unit withdrew from Chechnya under a peace deal between Moscow and separatist leaders. Itar-Tass news agency said. It quoted Russia's security chief Ivan Rybkin as saying that only logistics and transport units would remain in Chechnya pending a final pullout next month. Reuters - Moscow

Islamists held in Egypt

Egyptian police arrested 200 members of a new Islamic militant group that authorities allege is funded by the banned but influential Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Ahram newspaper said police made a "swift crackdown" on the "Kotbioun", named after Sayed Koth, a Brotherhood leader executed in 1966 for attempting to overthrow then-President Gamal Abdel Nasser. AP - Cairo

'Euro weaker than mark' claim denounced

The German Finance Minister Theo Waigel and Chancellor Minister Friedrich Bohl denounced an opposition leader who predicted the euro would be weaker than the German mark. Gerhard Schröder, premier of Lower Saxony and a chancellor candidate for the opposition Social Democrats, said that "naturally the euro will be weaker than the mark". Reuters - Bonn

Tung chooses top official

Hong Kong's leader-designate, Tung Chee-hwa, moved closer to forming his post-colonial administration at the weekend with the appointment of the territory's popular top civil servant Anson Chan. Mr Tung said that he would meet all principal officials of the existing government starting from today. Reuters - Hong Kong

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Tibetan activists set off Lhasa bomb

area Poole
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A large bomb has exploded in central Lhasa, the most serious sabotage attempt this year in Tibet by anti-Chinese activists.

The blast occurred early on Christmas Day, but details only emerged at the weekend.

The device was placed at the front of the Lhasa metropolitan district government offices, in the middle of the city. Windows were shattered up to 100 yards away, and

two hotels opposite the blast were damaged. According to the London-based Tibet Information Network (TIN), five people were injured, including two nightwatchmen at the government offices and shopkeepers living nearby.

The size of the explosion, at 1.30am, has made it impossible for the Chinese authorities to ignore or to deny.

A broadcast on the official Tibet Radio station described the blast as "yet another counter-revolutionary bombing staged by the Dalai clique

in Lhasa city" and called it "an appalling act of terrorism".

The Tibetan exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has always argued against the use of violence in Tibet's struggle against the Chinese, but this is the third bomb to go off in Lhasa this year, and by far the biggest. A government official told Reuters: "It was a huge explosion that could be heard a long way off."

As 1996 draws to a close, Chinese repression and control in Tibet is at its most severe for years, with monks being expelled from monasteries or

arrested as part of a political "re-education" campaign. The harshness of the Chinese authorities' approach to Tibet was again illustrated at the weekend when news emerged of a long prison sentence imposed on a 30-year-old exiled Tibetan musician, a former Fulbright scholar in the US, who was arrested while making an unauthorised film about folk music and dance in Tibet.

Ngawang Choephel, who left Tibet when he was a child, was arrested in September 1995 about two months after arriving in Tibet. He has

been sentenced to 18 years for allegedly spying, China also repeatedly accused "a certain foreign country" - clearly meaning the United States - of funding him and providing equipment in return for information.

This is the longest sentence passed for a political offence other than murder since 1989, when two monks were jailed for 19 years.

An official radio broadcast said that Ngawang Choephel entered Tibet "to carry out his activities under the pretext of collecting information on folk songs and dances in

Tibet... in an attempt to provide the information gathered to the Dalai clique's government-in-exile and to an organisation of a certain foreign country".

It said that he had confessed to the crimes, but gave no details. In contrast, Westerners who travelled with the musician in Tibet said he was genuinely involved in filming dance and music, and anxious to avoid anything political, said TIN.

The length of the sentence may be meant as a warning to other Tibetan exiles who visit Tibet.

If a Tibetan exile enters Tibet under Chinese immigration procedures he does so as a Chinese citizen and thus loses any protection from his country of residence.

Ngawang Choephel had Indian travel documents but was not given a foreign passport.

In Washington the State Department spokesman, John Pinger, said the US was "quite concerned" about the sentence. Ngawang Choephel studied ethnomusicology at Middlebury College, Vermont during the period 1992-3.

Capturing nature's pulse in the Pacific heart of a mangrove forest



Global vision: This natural shape is the result of a forest drying out near Voh village, New Caledonia, in the Pacific. The photo is part of a project, under Unesco patronage, to be completed by the year 2000 and sponsored by Fujifilm. It will be an 'inventory' of the planet in the form of aerial shots, intended to lead to a better understanding of its ecological evolution. Photograph: Yann Arthus-Bertrand/Fujifilm

Police block Belgrade protests

Mark Heinrich
Reuters

Belgrade - Serbian security police blocked a march by 60,000 people in Belgrade yesterday in the 42nd day running of pro-democracy demonstrations. The protest column was intercepted after it poured into the Serbian capital's main pedestrian mall following fiery speeches by leaders of the Zajedno (Together) opposition coalition in Republic Square.

Riot police were enforcing a ban on street marches imposed by the ruling Socialist Party (SPS) after a mêlée on Christmas Eve between Zajedno protesters and government loyalists huddled into Belgrade to intimidate the opposition. A Zajedno supporter was reportedly trampled to death as crowds tried to flee a police charge.

Police created two cordons to box in demonstrators yesterday. Protesters reacted, as before, by walking in circles as if they were imprisoned. They also shouted "murderers" and "dogs" at police. A carnival atmosphere set in, with some demonstrators joining hands in Serbian folk dances. No violence was reported.

Up to a quarter of a million people have demonstrated in Belgrade and other Serbian towns daily in a campaign to reverse the SPS's annulment of municipal elections won by the Zajedno bloc on 17 November.

Zajedno, backed later by findings of a special Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe mission, accused the SPS of vote rigging and wants its victory reinstated in 14 cities including Belgrade. Other municipalities were swept by the SPS.

Chateau sale sows grapes of wrath

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

With the season of good cheer in France well underway, some very unseasonal wraths are flying around concerning the future of Chateau d'Yquem, a Sauternes lauded by connoisseurs as one of the consistently finest dessert wines made.

This quintessentially French quarrel was prompted by the announcement last month that the chateau and its vineyards were to be sold to the international luxury goods concern, Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH). When the first writ was issued on Christmas Eve - from one brother to another - the affair started to assume the dimensions of a family feud that could last for generations.

The two sides then started to air their passionate arguments for public delectation, and it became clear that the new year could offer a graphic case study in what happens when exclusive and traditional French companies meet modern international commerce. Despite stiff rear-guard resistance from many of the French families concerned, this is a clash that will only become more frequent.

It was on 28 November that the public first heard the news: Chateau d'Yquem, owned by the aristocratic Lur-Saluces family since 1785 and part-owned by them for the previous 200 years, had been sold to the giant LVMH group. The reputed price paid by LVMH for the controlling stake was 500m French francs (£59m).

Reaction to the sale was mixed: from a resigned "that's the only way to survive in this day and age" to profound regret and even anger that so vital a part of France had been betrayed to foreigners.

Almost immediately, how-

ever, the sale was contested from inside the family. The older brother, Marquis Eugène de Lur-Saluces, who as well as heading the company is said to have masterminded the sale, was challenged by his younger brother, the Count Alexandre de Lur-Saluces, who has managed the chateau for the past 28 years.

While acknowledging that he was a minority shareholder, Count Alexandre said that a clause written into the company's statute when he became manager prohibited any change of ownership without his approval - and he did not approve. This is the sense of the writ he issued last week.

The marquis insisted that the family had no choice but to sell if Chateau d'Yquem was to survive. He claimed that a majority of the family, accounting for 90 per cent of its shares, were on his side.

The count argued that for the chateau to be controlled by an outside, international interest, was tantamount to betraying the family spirit and would jeopardise standards. For good measure, he accused his brother of being "easily led".

Neither the traditional character nor the standards of Chateau d'Yquem are in doubt. The chateau is a classic fortified farm in the regional style, surrounded by 103 hectares of vineyards in the heart of the Sauternes, south of Bordeaux.

All the grapes are selected and hand-picked only by the most experienced and specialised pickers. It is said that one vine produces only one glass of Chateau d'Yquem. In some years, no vintage is produced because quality is judged too low. The latest vintage to be released, the 1990, is sold at more than £800 a bottle.

Former murder capital of US rocked by the lowest killing count in 20 years

David Osborne on the Big Apple's sudden rash of lawfulness

New York - Branded for years as the crime capital of the world, New York City was armed this weekend with figures to show that things have changed. It recorded fewer murders in 1996 than in any year since 1968; the decline in the number of random murders by strangers, meanwhile, was especially dramatic.

As of Saturday, the tally of murders in the city stood at 972 for the year, less than half the record total of 2,245 murders committed in 1990. 1996 is set to be the least murderous year in New York City for almost two decades.

The end-of-year figures, released by

the New York City Police Commissioner, Howard Safir, are especially striking, however, in highlighting the drop in random acts of murder.

In 1996, 19 per cent of murder victims in the city were killed by strangers, compared to 37 per cent in 1993. Four-fifths of the murders, therefore, were committed by people who were acquainted with their victims.

"The city is now safer in that, one, you are less likely to be murdered, and two, you are less likely to be attacked

by a stranger," Mr Safir said. "It's the kind of thing that people always talk about, that if you go to New York somebody's going to come out of an alley and shoot you."

There was evidence also of a drop in the number of guns on New York's streets. Arrests for illegal possession of firearms were down by 20 per cent last year. Moreover, there were 21 per cent fewer shootings in the city and 20 fewer victims of shootings, the police figures said.

The statistics are good news for the city's tourist industry. They are also a boost to the Mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, who, in spite of being a Republican in a heavily Democratic city, is reckoned to have an easy path to reelection next year largely because of the sudden drop in the city's crime rates.

The figures will also give more fuel to the debate about where credit is due for the reversal of New York's crime problem. Although crime has been

dropping all over the United States, especially in large cities, the decline in New York has been especially marked and exceeds the national average.

Contributing factors are likely to include the waning of the crack-cocaine epidemic, an improving city economy and national efforts to make guns less easily available.

Mr Safir, however, attributed the latest statistics to new policing strategies in New York, in particular a crackdown on quality-of-life crimes like subway fare-dodging and urinating in public, that have also discouraged criminals from carrying guns.

Tension high as Hebron deal looms

Eric Silver
Hebron

The black of the slogans, spray-painted in crude Arabic by Jewish settlers on the Cordoba Arab girls' school, is still legible through the Palestinian whitewash. "Arabs out!" reads one. "Death to the Arabs!" another. "Baruch Goldstein - may he blot out your name!" a third.

Goldstein, an American-born settler, was beaten to death by angry worshippers nearly three years ago after massacring 29 Muslims at prayer in what the Arabs revere as the Ibrahim Mosque and the Jews as the tomb of their Patriarchs.

On the brink of an Israeli redeployment in Hebron, the last West Bank city under occupation, he remains a symbol for both communities - a heroic martyr to many of the 450 settlers, the ultimate oppressor to the 150,000 Palestinians.

Under an agreement expected to be sealed this week, Israel will hand over 85 per cent of Hebron to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. The Cor-

doba school, which draws its 205 pupils from all over the city, will remain within the Jewish enclave, under Israeli military rule, as will 15,000 Palestinian residents.

A red, white, black and green Palestinian flag flies defiantly from the window of the headmistress's office on a rocky hillside overlooking Beit Hadassah, the settler stronghold five minutes' walk from the disputed burial site of Abraham, the common ancestor of Arab and Jew. The headmistress, Firyal Abu Haykal, is emphatic: her school will not move.

"This school," she says, "belongs to the Palestinian Authority. It will continue to belong to the Palestinian Authority. The settlers curse our children, they beat them, they throw stones at them. But we have no choice but to stay."

But will the parents continue sending their daughters? "The authority has barred our pupils from transferring to other schools on the Palestinian side of town," Mrs Abu Haykal said. "They won't be accepted. I brought three of my



Collared: Two Palestinians being marched off by an Israeli soldier in the centre of Hebron yesterday after firebombs were thrown at Israeli troops. Photograph: AFP

13 and 14. All the parents I've talked to say they will make the same sacrifice."

Like many of the Palestinians who are standing their ground among the settlers, Mrs Abu Haykal does not see, perhaps

does not want to see, redeployment as the last word. "I believe the final goal of the Oslo agreement is to end the occupation. Eventually, it will come to an end. We've waited 30 years. Why not wait another five?" Below the Cordoba

school, Arab labourers are building an extra storey on a settler *reshva* seminary. In a nearby coffee shop, Yusuf Sharabati, a 70-year-old in a black and white checkered *keffiyeh*, says he is angry with them, but can't bring himself to

interfere. "They have to live," he admitted, "and we have no work for them."

In the fruit and vegetable market between the *reshva* and the mosque, Arab traders are worried that they will soon have no customers. "Business is very bad already," said Muhammad Rajabi. "People are afraid to come to this area because of the police and the settlers. It will be worse after the redeployment. We shall have to move."

Up to 2,000 sympathisers came to reinforce the Hebron settlers over the Sabbath but most of them had left yesterday. The city was frozen in uncertainty. Arab youths lobbed a couple of ineffective petrol bombs at Israeli checkpoints.

The Jews, like the Arabs, are still unconvinced that anything is going to change. "There isn't going to be a withdrawal," said Moshe Ben-Zimra, a settler leader.

Last night, the Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, met Mr Arafat in Gaza in an attempt to resolve the remaining problems before

هكذا من الأصل

Tuning in by remote control

ANNUS HORRIBILIS, ANNUS MIRABILIS

Alan Yentob was the visible face of BBC moguldrom. Then John Birt flicked the switch. By Thomas Sutcliffe

A little over a year ago, Alan Yentob, then controller of BBC1, gave an interview to this newspaper. The occasion was the imminent arrival of the Christmas schedules, a scheduler's potential Waterloo, when a whole year of arcane manoeuvring and skirmishes by the television generals comes down to a single set-piece battle.

Traditionally the BBC has played the part of Wellington in these encounters, enjoying at this one time of the year an advantage which it often loses for the rest. Which may be why Yentob spoke of the occasion with particular relish. "It's one of the few occasions of the year", he said, "when you could be getting people just sitting down watching your schedule quite consistently throughout the evening."

But it is also worth noting that the possessive "your" refers not just to the BBC but to the controller himself, uniquely possessed of a power to commission and arrange the programmes. For senior television executives, scheduling is perhaps the most prized skill of all – an often intuitive mystery which marks out the true elect. And at the end of this year, Alan Yentob, a high priest of the arena, no longer has a schedule to call his own. Because what this year brought him was a paradoxical and unenviable gift: a promotion that many people saw as a demotion.

It took him some time to digest his change of status from controller of BBC1, able to commission programmes and spend the money, to the newly-created post of director of programmes, responsible for making sure the new controllers get the programmes they want. Though the BBC had been discussing a radical reorganisation for well over a year, Yentob had little idea that the mainly managerial task of amalgamating television and radio in-house production would eventually fall to him.

In the event he was informed only three days before the official announcement (vivid proof, incidentally, that John Birt's admiration for new management techniques remains only theoretical in some respects).

Yentob's new job may be daunting, but when John Birt says it is of crucial importance to the BBC he isn't just talking a soothing fiction. If the corporation is to survive as one of the world's great production houses rather than just a superior publisher-distributor, then much of that future depends on what Alan Yentob does next. He will have to ensure that the BBC is in a position to generate intellectual property

that it can exploit in an explosion of new technical outlets. In some respects it would be hard to think of a more demanding post to occupy.

His difficulty, though, was that it didn't look like that from the outside. "I want to be good, and I want to be happy," Yentob wrote during one of the BBC's recent staff training seminars (holy days of obligation for the management faithful) and it occurred to many that he could have one or the other in his new job, but he was unlikely to get both. The received opinion ran something as follows: loyal and faithful servant confounds his critics (who had said he was too intellectual for the BBC's popular channel) by narrowing the ratings gap between the BBC and ITV.

Without abandoning the traditional values of the Corporation (indeed by self-consciously restoring some of them) he had taken the battle to the enemy. ITV, in creative trouble anyway, had to absorb the shock of being beaten for overall share for the first time in years. And as a reward for these services he found himself excluded from a job he loved; and, some argued, sidelined from the succession too.

On this last matter, the BBC Kremlinologists are still divided. Some, arguing that the power to commission is the fundamental weapon in an executive's hands, suggest that the move to production makes it more difficult for Yentob to ascend to the director-generalship. Others, more realistically, note that the task, if successfully achieved, would fill the one remaining blank in an already impressive CV. Nobody doubts his ability as a programme-maker or scheduler, or impresario of talent, but in the field of management he still has things to prove, and this would do it incontrovertibly. Yentob may have taken an unexpected fork in the road, but it might yet offer a more direct route to the top.

That hardly means things will be easy. As well as the Herculean task of putting BBC Production in order (a job that will require painful personnel decisions and the friction of organisational change), Yentob will have to reassert his own editorial clout (the fact that the perceptions may be wrong does not necessarily diminish the damage they might do). He has a certain amount of inertia on his side: by far the greatest proportion of the BBC's output comes from its in-house production talent (though, like other broadcasters, the BBC has a statutory obligation to take 25 per cent of its material from independent production companies). This gives Yentob a



Still on schedule? Yentob faces the Herculean task of putting BBC Production in order, reasserting his editorial clout and convincing colleagues he is still on the way up

very powerful base from which to affect the BBC's output in all areas. He also chairs the Programme Committee, a body which makes decisions about long-term editorial strategy for the entire Corporation. But there are other factors. The news that Jane Root (one of the founders of the very successful independent production company Wall to Wall) is shortly to be appointed as head of independent commissions, reporting directly to Michael Jackson and Mark Thompson, must give Yentob pause for thought. That figure of 25 per cent, after all, is a minimum, not a ceiling. In some areas, such as entertainment, around 42 per cent of programming is already coming from independent companies. If that figure was to be replicated elsewhere, the influence of BBC Production – and of the man who runs it – would unquestionably be diminished.

More intractable still is the question of personal relationships in this cat's-cradle of responsibility and authority. Michael Jackson, the new director of television and the figure to whom some newspapers have already handed the unofficial title of The Most Powerful Man in Television, has been a friend of Yentob's for some time, but not for as long as Root, with whom Jackson worked on influential programmes such as Channel 4's *The Media Show*. Her arrival sends a clear message that the BBC wants to improve its relationship with the independent sector, not merely meet its legal obligations. Those interested in the ebb and flow of power will be watching carefully to see in which direction certain unmoored independent producers begin to drift – will Peter Bazalgette, for example, the inventor of some of the BBC's most successful daytime pro-

gramming, offer new programmes through BBC Productions or through Jane Root's department?

If there is a cultivated rivalry here – one intended to make BBC Production fit for external competition by bringing in a sparring partner through the front door – then Yentob will make a formidable local champion, as he has large reserves of staff respect to trade on, plus a track record of innovation. He is also genuinely dedicated to the idea of the BBC as a public-service broadcaster, a vocational passion he will need to carry him through the tricky months ahead.

Not the least of his tasks now, though, is to convince all his colleagues of what he already believes – that his sudden change of title was a ladder and not a snake.

Tomorrow: Irvine Welsh's *annus mirabilis*

Sales guide

FASHION
STARTING TODAY
Shirin Cashmere for three weeks, at 11 Beauchamp Place, London SW3 (0171-581 1936).
Carnuti 1881 Menswear at 29 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 2278).

STARTED YESTERDAY
Austin Reed at branches nationwide.
Betty Jackson into mid-January, at 311 Brompton Road, London SW3.
Biba for 4-5 weeks, at 15 Short's Gardens, London WC2 (0171-240 6694).
Burton for 4 weeks, at West 1 Shopping Centre, 379 Oxford Street, London W1, and at all stores nationwide (01321 267866).
Cashmere Studio at 10 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-245 9111).
Carnuti 1881 womenswear until 31 Dec, at 10 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-493 2278).
Cine pearls until 31 Jan, at 61a Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-589 5584).
Designworks for 3 weeks, at 1st Avery Row, London W1.
DKNY Bond Street, London W1.
Dorothy Perkins at West 1 Store, 379 Oxford Street, London W1, and branches nationwide.
Emporio Armani at 191 Brompton Road, London SW3 (0171-823 8818) and stores across London. Sales in Manchester and Glasgow start tomorrow.
Elan Nationwide.
George Armani at 37 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-235 6232).
Hobbs at branches nationwide.
Ken Lane until 31 Jan, at 31 Burlington Arcade, London SW3 (0171-499 136) and 88 Beauchamp Place, SW3 (0171-584 1985).
Monsoon at 21 The Market, London WC2, and stores nationwide.
Next Nationwide.
Oasis until end of January, at 292 Regent Street, London W1 and branches nationwide.
Red or Dead at all London stores.
The Scotch House for 2-3 weeks, at 3 Brompton Road, London SW1 and stores across London.
Simpsons until 25 Jan at Piccadilly, London.

ALREADY ON
Ghost, Kate Jones, Claudia Sabine, Blazer (Moss Bros Group), Racing Green, Ronit Zilkha

HOMES AND INTERIORS
Maples at stores nationwide.
Ikea at 2 Drury Way, North Circular Road, London NW10 (0181-208 5400) and branches in Croydon, Birmingham, Gateshead, Leeds and Warrington.

DEPARTMENT STORES
STARTING TODAY
Fortnum and Mason at 181 Piccadilly, London W1 (0171-734 8040). Reductions of up to 50 per cent on women's, men's and children's clothing. Women's fashion includes designer collections such as Jean Muir, Jasper Conran, Max Mara, Mani and YSL. Among bargains in menswear are suits reduced from £495 to £295, Loro Piana duxskin wool overcoats, reduced from £495 to £295.

STARTED YESTERDAY
Debenhams (0171-408 4444).
Fenwick for 3 weeks, at 63 New Bond Street, London W1, and at stores in Brent Cross, at Ricemans of Canterbury, Fenwick of Newcastle, Tunbridge Wells, Windsor, York and Leicester.

Harvey Nichols at Knightsbridge, London SW1 and in Leeds.
Liberty at Regent Street, London W1. Selfridges for about a month, at Oxford Street, London W1.

ALREADY ON
British Home Stores nationwide.

SHOES
STARTED YESTERDAY
Jones Bootmakers at branches across London. Pled a Year At 31 Old Bond Street, London W1 and all branches in London, Manchester, Glasgow, Brighton, Brent Cross and Lakeside Shopping Centre (details 0171-499 9204).

ALREADY ON
Church's, Ravel

HOMES & INTERIORS
STARTED YESTERDAY
Heal's until 19 Jan, at 196 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (0171-636 1666) and stores in London and Guildford.
The Pier Stores around the country, including King's Road, London SW3.
Royal Worcester Spode
126 Regent St, London W1.

PRIDE & PREJUDICE

by Tracey Austen

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single player in possession of a good forehead must be in want of a doubles partner.

"My dear Mr Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that there are to be new balls at Netherfield? What a fine thing for our girls!"

"Lizzie, my dear," said Mr Bennet to his favourite daughter, "it appears your mother wants you to have a set with Mr Bingley."

"Oh but father," replied Lizzie, "Jane is so much more accomplished at the net than I and her ground strokes would do us all credit, far better than mine ever could. Might she not go in my place?"
"As long as one of you will play it matters not which. But we do not want a walkover so let us take the thorough," sighed Mr Bennet.

A C Webster, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancs

HEART OF DARKNESS

by Terence Conran

Any wallpaper – even flocked – would have been welcome. This was clearly not the Fulham Road, although the character was interesting.

Stephen Smithson, Leeds

MIDDLEMARCH

by TS Eliot

Mr Casaubon was lost. He paused on the bridge at Westminster, and considered where he was. But for some reason he could not think clearly; could not think at all, could not ...

He walked to the railing. The Thames still flowed below, oily, like paint. Disconnected timbers were borne on its sluggish surface. But no fish swam there, thought Mr Casaubon; no blue kingfishers flashed along the level water. Too-wit, too-woo, said his lips. Too-wit, too-woo.

But he had grown too old for wooing; too stiff in the knees, too ponderous of manner. How must others perceive him, with his bald head and tight waistcoat?

He turned back to the road. Carriages swarmed through ruts, and men rushed with umbrellas. So many men, moving frantically and without purpose, shadowy in the rain.

"Regardez," he said to himself. "Le monde, l'abîme."
Durham, Dhamppadda nada, niente, nicht."

G Strugnelli, Coulsdon, Surrey

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (OR BATH)

by Emma Thompson

We were just outside Bath, on the edge of the Cotswolds, when the tea took hold. "I do so apologise for the inconvenience, ma'am, but I simply must ask the carriage driver to stop."

I looked at Mr Charles Winthrop. His face had a strange, contorted expression. A face, I might add, that normally was not without certain pleasing aspects. "But why? Do you wish to be ill?" I asked. His eyes were crossed. His legs, also, were in such a fashion. "No, ma'am," he replied. His eyes rolled about in an agreeable manner. He crossed and uncrossed his legs with hardly a pause between.

"Mr Winthrop, what can be the matter?"
"Quite simply, Mrs Branagh," he said, "I must water the begonias."

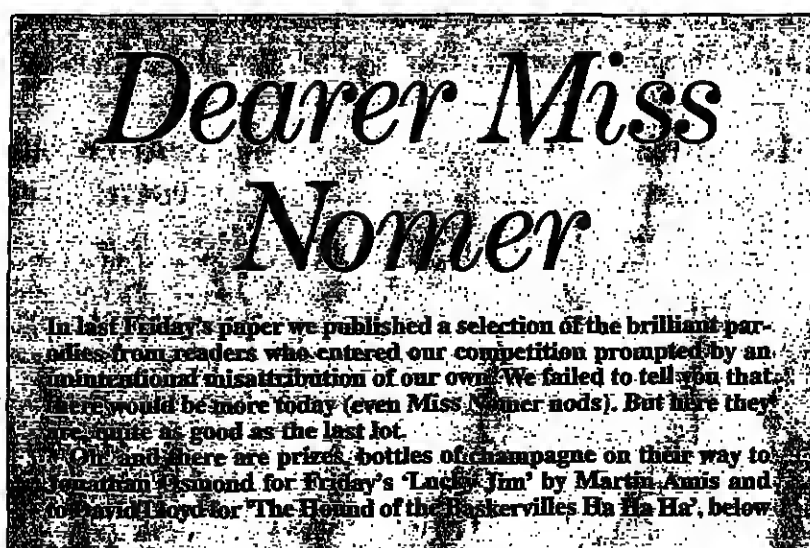
I felt light-headed. My voice faltered as I spoke. "Why didn't you say so? I thought you were needing the toilet!"

Norman Ferguson, Glasgow

À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU

by M Propper

At Aunt Amiot's I lie awake listening for Monsieur Swann's bell, knowing that I must have Mummy's goodnight kiss as her breasts cushion me to sleep into that magic-lantern land where chauffeurs in



In last Friday's paper we published a selection of the brilliant parodies from readers who entered our competition prompted by an unintentional misattribution of our own. We failed to tell you that the winners would be more today (even Miss Nomer aoud). But here they are, as good as the last lot.

Oh and there are prize bottles of champagne on their way to the winners. Second for Friday's 'Lucky Jim' by Martin Amis and third for 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' by Sir Arthur Doyle.

rubber uniforms become my nuns of speed sweeping me through salons and cathedrals to dark places where hooded butchers push hapkins into cages while their naked delivery-boys play with thick sausage. Is this normal?

My dear Marcel, this is perfectly normal for a growing Jewish boy. I'm just a mite concerned about your slight insomnia. Combray can be so bracing. Avoid too many madecine cakes at supper. Try instead lime tea. Meanwhile why not a little seaside air? Next time Papa is deep into his naughty *cordon sanitaire* take Mummy to *Galerias Lafayette* for a new bra (Oedipus range up to 44DD) and then a room for two at the Grand Hotel Cabourg. Sleep tight.

Roger Betteridge, Shardlow, Derbyshire

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT

by Timothy Leary

The Owl and the Pussycat dropped a tab And sat back to see what they'd see The Book of the Dead had been well read

For when they were out of their tree The Owl looked down at his feet on the ground And sang to a small star. "O luminous Pussy, O Pussy you glow, What a luminous Pussy you are, You are!

What a luminous Pussy you are!" Pussy said to the Owl "Oh Man, how you howl! Your voice, it has power and grace We should form a band, and travel the land But what shall we do for a bass?" So they tripped down the street, they were hoping to meet A bassist who knew all his chords And there on a stage, a Piggy Wig played And the notes they came straight from the Lord.

The Lord, The Lord And the notes they came straight from the Lord. "Say Pig, fancy joining this band we are coining?"

Said the Piggy, "Sure man, count me in!" So they moved to LA and recorded next day

With Bowie, Beefheart and McGuinn Their debut LP – *The Pig, Pussy and Me* It went triple gold in a week And "Paw/Trouter/Wing" together still sing. Lysergically fuelled, so to speak To speak Lysergically fuelled, so to speak.

Alan Weston, London E18

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

by Sir James Goldsmith

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey, Where Brussels rules and Europhobes decay. Federalists may flourish or may fade A breath can make them, as a breath has made. But we bold Sceptics, our great nation's pride, Have high ideals that may not be denied. A time there was, ere griefs o'erwhelmed our land, When I could be content with head in sand.

For me light labour spread her wholesome store, And piled me up a billion, maybe more. But then I yearn'd to grasp *Britannia's* sword, And high me home from indolence abroad. No more I cried "*Nunc est bibendum*" But "let my people have a referendum". Euro-lackeys lashed with words unkind And the loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind, But still they gazed, and still the wonder grew That I should have such wealth but not a clue.

Geoffrey Langley, Bristol

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

HA HA HA by Sir Arthur Roddy Doyle

I'm a doctor. I was in the house with Holmes. He turned and looked at me. His nose sloped down in a curve. It was like one of the little hills on the pitch

and putt in Barrytown. I went there once with my dad. It was dead boring. "There's this dog." "Oh yeah?" "Big bastard." "How d'ya know?" "Don't be a bloody cunjit Watson. Your Baskerville man told me." "Will we go and see him?" "We will."

He had a big house this Sir Baskerville. Struck in the middle of nowhere. We went on the train. There was a lot of chattering about and this fellow got stuck in the quicksand. It was all sticky and smelt like old farts. Holmes and me killed the dog and we went home. I never liked dogs much. "How d'ya do that Holmes?" "Dead easy, Watson."

David Lloyd, Bristol

KARAOKE

by Beatrix Potter

In which an Edwardian authoress, B P, known for her anthropomorphic animal tales but struck with writer's block, begins to see and hear her own characters and scenes in reality.

The scene plays in a London restaurant. B P is discussing with her agent a theatrical adaptation of a tale of a dysfunctional mole.

Agent: Listen, the director's not happy with the ending, it's a bit preachy, not enough sex ... are you listening?

B P is staring at the adjacent table, where a squirrel, a rabbit and a mouse are taking tea.

Squirrel (sternly adjusting its spectacles): Well, mouse, I hope you're ashamed of yourself, you naughty little fellow. Fancy stealing my whole ... B P (mouthing the words, astonished): ... piece of Cheddar ...

Agent: Are you feeling all right? B P: It's speaking my lines. Agent: Who, the squirrel or the mouse? etc

Jon Hughes, Cheadle, Cheshire

The wrong tunes for Redditch's young voters

John Major is "quite nice, a decent bloke", according to a young man on our panel of first-time voters in Redditch. He is not the only one who thinks so. This perception of the Prime Minister is widely shared. It also happens to be remarkably imperceptive. John Major is a tough political fighter, a calculating partisan; he has some political achievements to his record, but, like most other politicians at one time or another, he has placed his own leadership and the short-run advantage of party before the common interest.

But let that pass; Brian Mawhinney may think himself entitled to a new year's jig at this widespread sense that John Major is a good bloke, coupled as it is with an almost equally widespread view of the Labour leader as a man with a plastic smile. Cue yet more asinine attacks on the man's physical appearance.

The Tories currently have three songs to sing. Number one is that being hummed by the youth of Redditch, "honest John". The man in shirt-sleeves bearded the punters in 1992, so why not again? (He didn't: all the evidence says that the outcome of the election was decided well in advance of the contest itself and owed nothing to Mr Major's soapbox.) Readers and viewers should stand ready for a deluge of man-in-saloon-bar/sub-Stanley Baldwin images and rhetoric.

The other Tory song in a Major key

is good economic news. The Prime Minister's new year's message today is like Philip Glass's music, you can drop into it at any point, even start backwards, and it sounds pretty much like the same chord: things are looking up. According to the Nationwide, house prices will have risen by 15 per cent in the two years ending next winter. This, the Deputy Prime Minister assures us, is the kind of inflation that is good for us. But it is also apparent that there is no reliable relationship between changes in the economic indicators and voting intentions. We have had enough economic recovery by now to see that better prospects for jobs and incomes are not an inducement to commit to voting Tory. Memories of Tory economic incompetence are still strong; and besides, the experience of relative prosperity seems to have lessened the risk factor in voting for Labour.

Mr Mawhinney ought not to dance before he has looked in more depth at what our panel of young people is saying. Young people of the West Midlands may have a spice-girlish perspective on political leadership, but they are also making two other judgements. One is that Labour is a party of ideas. Youth may be cynical about Labour's capacity to "do things" in office but the erstwhile party of the left still seems to these young people to be the carrier of hope for change. The second should worry Tory strategists more.



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Young people - they undoubtedly share this view with their elders - do not see Labour as a threat.

Which brings us on to the Tories' third song: or rather, warning siren. It is a warning that voting Labour is a "gamble", a risk to your own purse and pocket. But Labour's great achievement of the past year must be the way it has made itself financially safe for power. It has neutralised the charge that it cannot be trusted with management of the public money.

Nevertheless, Labour must still guard its flanks. This week the Cabinet's records for 1996 are opened. The sea-

men's strike that year will be recollected, along with the activist past of such Labour notables as Prescott. Undue proximity to old-style unionism still holds an electoral danger for Labour. While John Monks of the Trades Union Congress strives to redefine a 21st-century relationship between organised labour and the state, some of his colleagues seem to hanker for the past. The corporatism that John Edmonds of the GMB wants is unpalatable to most people, including union members.

But making Labour safe is not the same as making Labour attractive. Too much attention can (and will be) paid

to Tony Blair's personality. Indifferent or low ratings in the personality stakes can be lived with. At her apogee, Margaret Thatcher enjoyed some grim figures for public appreciation of her bearing, voice and persona: she did not win because of her teeth. But Mr Blair's deficit serves to expose Labour's electoral problem. The Tories are disunited, for all the strips of veneer applied by honest John and Michael Heseltine; their economic record (taxes and ejection from the Exchange Rate Mechanism) will dog them till polling day. But, perceiving that, electors will not automatically make it Mr Blair's day. They need a positive reason to vote Labour, and they are not sure they see it yet.

This gap has been noticeable for some months now. It is not about some shopping list of policies - especially one carefully pruned to excise any commitments to spend more. It is more Labour's lack of a theme, along the lines of President Bill Clinton's successful bid to identify himself with what Americans call "soccer moms" - working women with children. Labour has songs with immense popular appeal, about the common condition of society, about order, equity and the effectiveness of social institutions, especially schools. What the people want are more riffs - apophorisms like Tony Blair's own brilliant coinage about crime and its causes. Labour has its causes. If it is going

to do anything in power it must address educational under-achievement by too many of the pupils enrolled in state schools, behaviour in the public space, justice and security at work - which is not at all the same as trying to revive union membership. When it comes to voting, those young people in Redditch are not really going to decide their vote according to their present response to Tony Blair's smile, or his hairdo, nor on John Major's impressively unshirt-sleeved forearms. They are going to vote for the party that connects their own concerns and ambitions directly to its policy and programmes.

Shock horror: children still read

The first thing to say about any research on children's reading habits - like that today from Surrey University - is that children still have them. That horror emerged as the most popular category for younger teenagers' reading should offend no one. (Advocates of Victorian values especially should consult the bestseller lists in Wilkie Collins's day.) What matters is that imagination is still fed from the printed page - despite television, desktop computers and despite the real and alleged inadequacies of the schools.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Put children at centre of adoption law

Sir: John Major is a caring family man and it has to be assumed that his determination to introduce a radical reform of the adoption system ("Adoption law to curb political correctness", 28 December) is not a cynical piece of electioneering but rather has its origins in a briefing by proponents of "privatised" adoption in the United States.

Unfortunately the Prime Minister may be unaware of the complex and sensitive issues which need to be taken into account.

Those professionals engaged in child care, whether social workers, foster parents or lawyers, agree that all children need the security of a stable family life if they are to thrive. Everyone is horrified by the numbers of older children who live in residential homes before leaving care without that stability.

The new fashionable solution is to decree that all children who are taken into care shall be adopted if they are not returned home within, say, a year or 18 months. Because fewer adoption placements than foster placements break down, it is argued that this will provide greater security. Inefficiency by local authorities in finding adoptive homes will be overcome by the use of private agencies.

This approach overlooks a number of important matters. It is not in the interests of all children in care to be legally, and in some cases psychologically, separated from their families. Not all children come into care because they have been rescued from abusive and uncaring parents. Many have loving families who are unable to look after them because of ill health or because of the demands of siblings. They may need to live apart from their family but still remain part of the family.

While adoptive homes may have a lower rate of failure, it is important to compare like with like. A toddler or young child is less likely to be disturbed than an older child, and the greater the disturbance the more pressure is placed on the new family. More substitute families are needed but private agencies may not be the solution to finding them. Local authorities have been using private agencies for two decades.

This government has already given these problems detailed consideration for the last seven years. A review of adoption law was initiated in 1989, and a White Paper, "Adoption: The Future", was published in 1993. A Bill was published at the beginning of this year which places the interests of the individual child at the centre of all decisions which have to be made. Its measures have wide support.

If the Prime Minister genuinely wishes to help children in care - and I believe he does - he should ensure that time is made available now for legislation or commit his future government to introduce the Bill in the first session after the election. JOHN MITCHELL
Family Law Chambers
London EC4

Sir: There are indeed 55,000 children in local authority care. However, over 40,000 of these children are already placed in substitute families with varying levels of support from local authorities. The remaining 15,000 are in residential care and 90 per cent of these are adolescents. The vast majority of these young



Trustees failed Royal Academy

Sir: It is understandable that the Royal Academy's secretary, David Gordon, should seek to play down the magnitude of the institution's recently disclosed financial and managerial predicament. But David Lister's impression ("Why Monet was the root of all evil", 16 December) that help might be coming from the Academy's "multi-millionaire trustees" is surely misplaced: had such support been available, it would not have been necessary, in the first place, to take and use as revenue £1m of trust funds earmarked for capital projects. Even this, it seems, was insufficient to keep the Academy solvent while funding its present £7m annual administration cost. It was only the simultaneous withholding of £200,000 of pension fund payments that enabled the Academy to stay within its £2.25m overdraft facility.

Perhaps the trustees will now dig into their own pockets. But, as things stand, it must be said that it seems an extraordinary check for them and the administrators to use the fact of the crisis they have presided over in secrecy as a justification for an increase in their own powers at the expense of those of the academicians. Quite correctly, the membership has now twice refused to cede authority to the secretary's proposed new governing body, which would be dominated by trustees and salaried administrators.

One would hope that - even if they make no noises of contrition - the secretary and trustees will now have the grace to allow the members themselves to decide, in the wake of the present administrative debacle, how, and by whom, their own house might best be put back in order. MICHAEL DALEY
Director
ArtWatch UK
Barnet, Hertfordshire

Why bus rage?

Sir: It is possible that the destruction of 37 buses in Bolton was caused by neither mindless vandalism nor commercial sabotage, but rather by the calculated, if perverse, action of people incensed at being robbed of their mobility by the withdrawal of all bus services over the Christmas holidays ("Vandals wreck bus fleet", 28 December).

If motorists were forbidden to use their cars at Christmas all hell would break loose, but lesser mortals are expected to accept their lot with equanimity. Maybe this misguided and destructive action was a cry of protest from those who see their enforced immobility as yet another symptom of society's accelerating bias against the poor. ALLAN HORSEFALL
Chairman, The Bus Users' Society
Manchester

Model males

Sir: In response to Jack O'Sullivan's call for new role models for men in 1997 ("Men plumb the depths of bad behaviour", 26 December), my own hero list is: Frank Zappa, Jean-Paul Gaultier, John Kenneth Galbraith and Brian Eno. I guess that means I want to be a rock composer with a kilt, a degree in economics and a bald head. Does anyone have better ideas? JEREMY CHENTY
Cambridge

Patten to blame for Peking move

Sir: What is truly "stomach-turning", to use Governor Chris Patten's phrase, is the ease with which he can use the press to pillory Peking and exonerate himself for the replacement next July of the sitting Hong Kong Legislative Council by an appointed interim chamber ("Patten lashes 'sick' plan for Hong Kong", 21 December). The Chinese authorities' description of their action as "necessary, reasonable and justified" is apt.

It is necessary because, consequent on Mr Patten's actions, the constituency basis on which the council was elected in 1995 did not conform with the constitution Peking and Britain's co-operation, had drawn up for Hong Kong when it reverts to China. China insistently warned before the Patten "reforms" were implemented that they meant the sitting council would have to be stood down at midnight on 30 June 1997 - an entirely unwelcome step imposed on Peking by Mr Patten. It is reasonable because the government of post-transition Hong Kong will need a legislature and because instant elections would overload a new administration. Therefore a nominated body is needed to serve until a new council can be elected in 1998 on the constituency basis agreed between Britain and China before Mr Patten's appointment. It is justified because the reforms

Non-smokers resent insults

Sir: Why must smokers like Jo Brand (21 December), who seem to be perfectly civilised in other respects, seek to justify the nuisance their addiction causes to the non-smoking majority by insulting us?

Are we really "po-faced" or, as recently suggested elsewhere, "health Nazis", simply because we dislike being forced to breathe foul-smelling, carcinogenic smoke and to have our clothes and hair made to stink of it?

I suspect that many people who enjoy smoking simply do not understand how unpleasant it is for those of us who do not. Personally, I would as soon spend an evening in a garage full of diesel fumes.

I wish Jo and her fellow smokers joy of their habit. All I ask is that they have the basic courtesy to respect my preference not to share it. JANET RUSSELL
Tollesbury, Essex

Keep shops shut

Sir: Your editorial ("Let the tills ring out glad tidings", 24 December) needs to be challenged - 24-hour opening by supermarkets should not be welcomed. You clearly have little idea of labour relations in the retail sector when you state: "Provided staff are paid fairly..." It is not only pay - many retail workers are given little choice about working these unsocial hours, managements are autocratic and the workforce is generally poorly organised.

I accept that long opening hours are convenient, but I would find it convenient if banks, council and government offices and leisure centres were open 24 hours. I do not clamour for this, because the workers in these areas deserve some time with their families. Enough is enough. It's time to return to decency and common sense. NEIL HADDY
Chesterfield, Derbyshire

Arts goalposts

Sir: Your report on the Policy Studies Institute's recent study on funding of the cultural sector (Arts Notebook, 21 December) implies that the study has limited relevance because the Government has - through the Lottery - recently "moved the goalposts on arts funding". An important objective of the study was to see whether this has indeed been the case. Its concentration on the year 1993/94 means it provides a baseline for judging what has happened - where the goalposts initially stood, how far they have been moved, if at all, and, if so, in what direction.

At an apposite moment, this is what the researchers intend to do. BERNARD CASEY
RACHAEL DUNLOP
SARA SELWOOD
Policy Studies Institute
London NW1

Double, double ...

Sir: I was delighted to see your front-page account (21 December) of the invocation of witchcraft to ensure the safety of Channel Tunnel passengers. With the winter solstice having a four-year cycle "in which the forces of earth, air, fire and water are involved", clearly one cannot be too careful.

This evident allusion to a combination of hydrogen derived

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Thank goodness for middle-class angst over jobs

Jobs, glorious jobs: they will be dripping from the trees in the new year if all this upbeat talk on the economy is to be believed. Employment prospects are the best for seven years, according to a survey out today from the employment agency Manpower. Coming hot on the heels of the record drop in unemployment reported last month, and the booming Christmas shopping figures, the jobs news is positive indeed.

Big jobs, little jobs, fat jobs, thin jobs: take your pick, for it seems there is a veritable employment nirvana looming. Well, on the basis of the old economic adage that what goes down must, given time, bounce back up again, the news is hardly surprising. But the curious thing is that nobody in the Labour market seems too cheerful about jobs growth this time round. Too many little thin jobs and not enough fat juicy ones, is the general complaint – and it is voiced loudest among the chattering classes. The new jobs – they tell us – are fragile creatures, liable to upend and die long before the next recession arrives. Even worse, according to the apocalyptic pundits, this new fragility problem is hitting the middle classes particularly hard. Whether it be through downsizing, out-sourcing or casualisation, something insidious out there is troubling our middle classes, traumatising our national culture, and undermining economic optimism for all. In case you missed it, job insecurity is the zeitgeist of the end of the century.

Which story should we believe? The Government is backing the glorious jobs tale; the journalists, insecurity. Neither are to be trusted. The Government's interest in talking up the labour market is clear. But journalists should declare their own preoccupation, too. How many times in the past few years have we seen articles or documentaries on shaky professional jobs and the anxious graduates who fill them? Irrespective of what is going on in the rest of the country, the publishing world and the media, including national newspapers, have shifted a lot of employees into temporary contracts and freelance work. That and the rising competition for popular jobs are understandably making the backs feel insecure. And that is why there is so much fuss about the new middle-class insecurity.

The real story about the labour market is rather different from both these special-interest views. Yes, as the Government claims, new jobs are being created. But a surprising proportion of these jobs are indeed part-time or temporary. That horrible anxious feeling of trying to cling to your pay cheque haunts an awful lot of people. But to characterise this angst and uncertainty as a wholly middle-class problem is ludicrous.

OK, we well-educated professional people may have a little to moan about. Two-thirds of the additional professional jobs created in the first four years of recovery were temporary. But middle-class insecurity may well be as temporary as those new jobs.

Think back to the height of the Eighties boom. An awful lot of people switched from one job to another very fast. Because companies were growing, workers found opportuni-



Yvette Cooper

Forget those temporary contracts for computer analysts or market researchers, and consider the security guards, the shop assistants ...

ties everywhere. Graduates filled with one employer after another. Funnily enough, they didn't seem to mind the instability of changing jobs when they were on the up. Instability only mutated into insecurity when recession struck. Temporary contracts suited many people fine when they knew they had plenty of offers to choose from.

Now, with employment rising again, those with the education, qualifications, or ability to acquire new skills quickly (in other words, the middle classes) are likely to find themselves once more in demand. We have lost our cushion against recession now, but we haven't lost our market power when times are good. Given another boom, or even just a few years of steady, sustainable growth, "middle-class job insecurity" could slip out of our vocabulary as fast as it slipped in.

If only the same thing could be said of insecurity in our society as a whole. Sadly, for the low-skilled, the torment of never knowing where the next week's work is coming from is very real – and it isn't going away.

Forget those temporary contracts for computer analysts or market researchers for a moment, and consider instead the security guards, the builders, the shop assistants and the care workers. Paid abysmally and accorded little employment protection, these workers really are insecure. As a new Cambridge study (reported in *The Independent* this weekend) reveals, manual workers are far more likely to end up in temporary work than

their professional peers. Even worse: between the odd week's work here and there is the dole. Government statistics show that an astonishing half of new claimants signing on have been on the dole before – and within the past year. A worryingly large group of people are becoming trapped in a weird world on the edge of the labour market, stumbling in and out of jobs.

The world of work seems to be polarising. The insiders have the skills to adapt, get new jobs and earn higher wages; the outsiders skirt along the edges, lacking the skills to break into permanent work.

Faced with this kind of portrait of the Nineties workplace, there is something rather attractive about middle-class insecurity. After all, if we are ever going to create the political will and the democratic consensus to do something about the problems of the poor and the low-skilled, we may need to persuade everyone else that they have something to gain as well. Nobody worried much about vulnerable employees when they were all manual workers. Life-long learning and retraining could have been very useful for the manufacturing workers who lost their jobs in the Eighties. But adult education has only become sexy since professional workers realised that they could benefit from it too, as they switched between jobs and careers.

Middle-class job insecurity could be a powerful force for change. Let us hope that the new government can capitalise on it and tackle the worse insecurity felt by those at the very bottom of the jobs pile.

Tony's wonder year: a look back at 1997

by Polly Toynbee

Imagine you have slept soundly for exactly a year, and today is December 30th, 1997. You have missed a lot. Much has happened, much has changed: you need bringing up to date.

When you fell asleep, the ship of state was on the rocks with a mutinous crew. Those shipwrecked mariners now sit glowering and confused upon the opposition benches, still in shock after 18 years of government, 50 seats short of power. If you had any doubts about whether New Labour would actually do anything when they won the election, let me set your mind at rest. Tony Blair knew that after his great victory he had only a short time to grab the initiative before the intractability of government fell upon him.

First came the promised Constitution Act, giving some independence to Scotland. The rest of us were bored rigid by this Celtic stuff only 8 per cent of the population lives in Scotland, after all. One more earnest Disinfectant forum from Edinburgh on the West Lothian question, and the rest of us would gladly have expelled them from the union altogether.

It made us English resentful. What was so special about the Scots? They feel oppressed by Westminster? Well, so do we all, especially Londoners, who live under its very shadow without any self-government.

Blair acted quickly to involve the rest of us. He added in reform of the Lords, abolishing hereditary peers and removing the appointment of life peers by politicians. They are now chosen by the Royal Society, the Royal Academy of Arts, the medical Royal Colleges, the Sports Council and other august bodies of the great and good. There are no bishops nor any representatives of other religions, as the Bill also disestablished the Church.

In truth, though, the arcane debate on the powers of the new second chamber threatened to be as boring as the Celts. So Tony Blair chose the moment to go for proportional representation for the Commons, ensuring we would never risk a Porridge, Howard or Redwood government in future. And probably guaranteeing Labour a second term.

At the same time the Commons was reformed: a commission will reduce the number of MPs by half. They will become a more professional cadre with committees served by a large, expert civil-service staff, also providing impartial information to journalists and others, in the hope of producing better-informed comment.

Europe welcomed Blair with warmth and generosity. His path is made easier in negotiations because Britain no longer huddles itself like a spanner into every Euro-machine. Despite



There is a sense that progress is possible, after the years of looking back to an imaginary golden era

the rhetoric, even now, at the eleventh hour, the single currency timetable may slip, as discontent over sharp cuts in pensions and welfare spills out on to the streets of Germany and France.

In the election, Labour made much of the state of the NHS. But nothing has changed, since the structure actually works well. A new independent complaints tribunal has been set up, giving rapid redress to patients, including some compensation, but withdrawing the right of patients to sue. Contradictory clinics for the young are now universal so every secondary-school pupil has a nurse or clinic to attend, close by and confidential. Teenage pregnancy rates are already falling.

A Royal Commission on Social Security is about to sweep away the old National Insurance system. There will be no automatic entitlements for any new claimants for sickness,

unemployment or pensions: money will only be paid out according to need. Labour dares to be far tougher on welfare schemes (under a new name) doing genuinely useful work, despite trade union objections. The quid pro quo is a raft of well-financed, individualised training and education programmes.

Private schools have been nationalised and brought under the control of a commission headed by George Walden, the former Tory MP: it was his idea. They have become super-schools for the brightest, regardless of means. As it dawns on middle-class parents of averagely-intelligent children that they will soon be using the state system, they are already turning their attention to the condition of local schools.

The defence budget has been halved, to bring it in line with the rest of Europe. It will take time for the money to come in

because of old contracts for useless fighter planes and tanks. But it will raise at least £10bn. We are bargaining to give up our permanent seat on the UN Security Council, in exchange for reform of the whole organisation. We have told the Northern Irish that they will have self-government in six months' time, and that our troops will leave, forever. We will not play nanny any longer, so if they want to go on fighting, that's up to them.

Billions have been saved by stopping the huge prison-building programme. In several strong speeches, Jack Straw has told judges to consider sentences that work, with proven

track records for rehabilitation. Lord Laming has been given money saved from prison building to set up a huge new crime-busting package, investing in prison regimes that reduce reoffending and schemes for young offenders outside prison that work.

Lord Will Hutton heads a Commission on the City of London. He will devise ways of actually implementing his own proposals on making banks and institutions invest for the long-term good of the country. The Bank of England has been made independent.

Lord Mervyn Broughton has been given the Department of National Heritage, because no politician knows anything about the arts. He has cancelled the millennium celebration in Greenwich, because it is too expensive for a temporary building. But he has set up a commission on ownership of the media, to consider severe restrictions on the amount of the market controlled by any one company. Labour won a big enough majority to feel no threat now from Murdoch.

As more die of CJD from BSE-infected meat, Labour made maximum use of the disaster to promote a new agricultural policy. We no longer fight a futile battle to foist our poisoned produce on our rightly suspicious neighbours. As a mark of our atonement for BSE, we direct subsidies to make British produce a symbol of the very highest quality, famed for organic purity. We may import cheaper meat and vegetables, but we shall export only the best. It makes economic sense to move upmarket.

Two good private member's bills tested the water and inflamed debate. Paul Flynn came top of the MPs' poll and brought in one to abolish the monarchy. Another bill sought to decriminalise cannabis and Ecstasy. Neither got near the statute books, of course. But in the excited debate, public opinion moved a long way in favour of both and the young felt more involved in politics.

So much for policy. All this has left the country reeling. But change was what they voted for. There is a sense that something can be done, progress is possible, problems are not insoluble, after all these years of looking backwards to an imaginary golden era. Many people used to fulminate about New Labour's pre-election caution, but it got them elected. Few thought Blair had the determination to act so decisively. But he seized the day.

Liam and Co play the Nineties game of pop stardom with post-modern aplomb, says Peter Popham

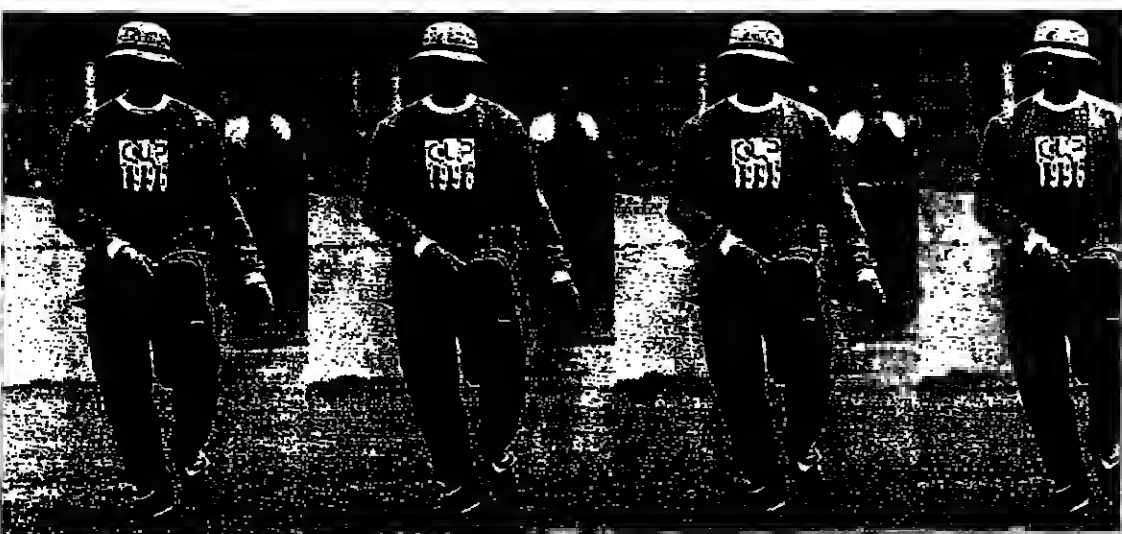
The art of big-time pop celebrity involves being impossible to ignore, no matter what it takes. We had already had enough of Oasis in 1995: 1996 should have been the year they died and disappeared. Indeed, much of the media spent much of the year predicting that event. Many of the stories that kept the band in the headlines were intimations of imminent disaster, the ritualistic paroxysms that band after band has undergone during the past 30-odd years, preceding break-up due to "musical differences", feuds and fights, a cancelled tour of the United States, walk-outs, tantrums, girlfriend distractions, recording studio bust-ups. The new album was postponed and postponed again. Liam was arrested paddling along Oxford Street early one November morning, allegedly the worse for drugs. And so on.

But the inevitable did not ensue: each pratfall, by some dreamlike logic, carried the band to a higher place, a securer fame. The only thing that kept the papers talking about them was the imminence of their demise, yet like martial artists Oasis converted all the negative energy and denial into affirmation and acclaim.

At the end of 1996, Oasis are bigger than ever, bigger than anyone since The Beatles and The Rolling Stones at their peak. They have sold 15 million records worldwide. *Morning Glory* alone has sold eight million. In May, they became the fastest-selling pop group in history, when half-a-million fans telephoned for tickets in five minutes. At Knebworth in August, where they played two concerts, both to 250,000 fans, and one of the concerts was relayed live to radio stations in 34 countries, they made £6m.

Among their peers, Oasis demand comparison with The Beatles. But when The Beatles became

Oasis after the orgy



world-famous and then set off on their long trajectory towards ultimate disintegration, everything they did was for the first time: they were the first band to have long hair, the first to flirt with the mystic East, the first to take LSD, the first to have problems with their wives. Together with the rather different stories generated by The Stones, Hendrix, The Doors and so on, the myth of pop stardom was invented, with every conceivable wrinkle from madness and murder to boredom and inanity already in place.

Thirty years on, after the whole thing has been rebashed over and over again, all that remains is to repeat what has gone before. That is

perhaps why the media are so keen to see the back of all the new bands as quickly as possible – it is the boredom of it all, the sheer predictability. But seeing as there is nothing new to be done, seeing as everything has already been tried, Oasis hit upon a novel solution: do everything that can be done, however contradictory and irreconcilable, at the same time.

In this they showed that they have the one key qualification for serious pop fame, far more important than musical ability: they are instinctively in tune with the spirit of the age.

The French sociologist Jean Baudrillard foresaw such a solution to the problem of contemporary fame in his book *The Transparency of Evil* (1990).

What do we do, he asks, "after the orgy"? After "the moment when modernity exploded upon us, the moment of liberation in every sphere" – the time, in Philip Larkin's formulation, ushered in by the *Lady Chatterley* trial and The Beatles' first LP "Now all we can do is simulate the orgy, simulate liberation. We may pretend to carry on in the same direction, accelerating, but in reality we are accelerating in a void, because all the goals of liberation are already behind us... We are obliged to replay all scenarios precisely because they have all taken place already..."

In 1996, Oasis have contrived to replay all scenarios that are available in a pop group. They fight, they kiss,

they take the celebrity girlfriend blame to mum; they boast about taking drugs; they lend support in a campaign against drugs; they conspicuously consume, they give abundantly to charity (more than £1m in all); they sneer and spit and swear, they turn out in play football for a good cause. They split, re-form, split, re-form, split, re-form – or perhaps they never split at all, and it's just silly rumours. In this way, by lying in all directions at once, they do what is otherwise very difficult these days: they mesmerise our attention.

They also contrive to oversee the most spookily post-modern development in pop music ever. "Nothing", Baudrillard went on to say, "... now disappears by coming to an end, by dying. Instead, things disappear through proliferation or contamination... as a result of the epidemic of simulation, as a result of their transfer into the secondary existence of simulation." With uncanny instinct, Oasis smile benignly at the "epidemic of simulation" that now surrounds them: a swelling aureole of tribute bands, No Way Sis, Oasis's, Oasis, Quoasis and Champagne Supernova, to name a few, who wear their clothes and play their songs as faithfully as possible at more or less humble gigs up and down the land. The most prominent of them, No Way Sis, now have a record contract of their own. It can't be long before they spawn a tribute band of their own.

At the still centre of all this strange and frenzied activity are two working-class Mancunians with one eyebrow apiece, one of whom, Noel, is down to earth and clever enough to let the whole thing spin on as it must, whatever strange place it may end up in.

One day, too, he may write a song that bears comparison with anything on The Beatles' *Revolver*. But it hasn't happened yet.

Her fourth birthday may well be her last, but she isn't ill



She's poor

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obituaries / gazette

Professor S. Herbert Frankel

S. Herbert Frankel was a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford, and Professor in the Economics of Underdeveloped Countries at Oxford University from 1946 until 1971. Born in South Africa in 1903, he lived a life closely intertwined with the fate of the British Empire, with its triumphant expansion following the First World War and its rapid contraction after the Second.

His father, a German-Jewish immigrant, had arrived in Johannesburg in 1896; as an "enemy alien" had fled the country during the First World War to escape internment, leaving his wife to bring up the children alone from 1915 to 1920; and then managed to build up a small produce company. (Under the leadership of Frankel's brother, Rudy, this business eventually developed into a major South African conglomerate, the Tiger Oats and National Milling Company.)

With an MA from Johannesburg and a PhD from the LSE, Frankel was appointed professor of economics at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg at the age of 28 and, over the next 15 years, led an extraordinarily active life, combining the roles of academic, economist, economic adviser and social critic. It was in this period that he formed that complex of beliefs to which he would remain firmly loyal thereafter, regardless of changing academic fashions and political constellations.

To ensure both economic growth and public welfare, he argued, it was essential that governments encourage an environment – political, social, cultural – in which private enterprise, individual initiative and capital accumulation could develop at every level of society. This credo, of course, put him at odds not only with various monopolistic enterprises (the railway company, for example), but also with the entire system of racial discrimination which, even before the official establishment of apartheid in 1948, denied the vast majority of the population in South Africa any chance of advancement.

Frankel developed his views in a series of books – *Co-operation and Competition in the Marketing of Maize in South Africa* (1926), *Railway Policy of South Africa* (1928), and *Capital Investment in Africa: its course and effects* (1938); as an economic adviser over a 20-year period to the South African statesman and liberal, Jan Hofmeyr (Minister of Finance during the Second World War under General Smuts); and as a founding editor of the *Forum*, a weekly committed to the gradual destruction of race barriers, speaking (as Frankel put it) for "the conscience of South Africa". As a member of Hofmeyr's inner circle, Frankel wrote for and helped produce *Coming of Age* (1930), a collection of articles on the future of South Africa which called for a "political system [built] not upon the treacherous basis of sectional interest but upon the broad and sure foundation of a common civilisation". One of Frankel's contributions (co-authored) to the book was characteristically out "The Poor White and Native". Among his students, and later colleagues, at Witwatersrand was Helen Suzman, in future years to become the leader of the anti-apartheid Progressive Party, and who always remained a close friend.

It was during his South African years that Frankel first began to serve frequently as a member of official inquiry commissions – a duty that took up much of his time throughout the 1940s and 1950s. He was certainly well aware that the reports ardently produced by such inquiries were most often fated to be ignored and shelved. But one could not be sure, and the work suited his temperament perfectly, taking him out of the ivory tower and into the workplace and the farm, to the homes of district commissioners and to meetings with tribal chiefs, across the vast stretches of the African continent.

He enjoyed the give-and-take of the committees and the challenge of hammering out a consensus among the members. Mention can be made of three



Frankel: money and liberty

among many such commissions: the Committee on Mines' Earnings (1941) which recommended – in vain – a system of social insurance based on loss of earnings; the working party on the East African groundnut scheme (1950), which successfully called for the project's abandonment; and the Royal Commission on East Africa (1953-55) which, among other things, recommended the gradual replacement of tribal by individual land tenure.

It was something of a irony that with his move to England immediately after the Second World War, Frankel once again found himself in a rather embattled position – the same system of beliefs which had made him a critic of incipient apartheid now led to his relative isolation among Oxford economists, who tended to see in him if not a downright reactionary, then at least an anachronistic colonialist. He remained the sceptic at a time when the take-off of underdeveloped countries was widely understood in terms of economic models, central planning, massive inputs of aid and the extrapolation of growth rates.

Development in the Third World, Frankel insisted, depended not so much on the application of general theories as on the specific cultural, social and economic heritage of a given country; on its ability to apply an equitable and stable system of finance and law enforcement. Or as he himself put it: "Those who would wish to develop Africa must hasten slowly, working with nature and not against it." Or again: "Economic progress results from the curbing of political power."

Looking for forums where he

could share common ground with fellow academics, Frankel in 1950 became a member of the Mont Pelerin Society (F.A. Hayek and Milton Friedman were among its members); and for some years he served as a visiting professor at the University of Virginia where the economics department, under the direction of Warren Nutter (later an Assistant Secretary of Defence in the Reagan administration), was conservatively – or as Frankel would have preferred it, "liberally" – inclined. In his autobiography, *An Economist's Testimony* (1992), Frankel expressed regret that over the years the philosophers and historians had largely dropped out of the Mont Pelerin Society, leaving it to the economists. And much of his own writing in later years straddled these various disciplines, most notably perhaps his *Money: two philosophies (the conflict of trust and authority)* (1977) and *Money and Liberty* (1980).

In Oxford, he found his most congenial settings first in Nuffield College, where he felt able to contribute actively to the development of what was then (just after the war) a still very new institution (and indeed still not built); and second – after his retirement in 1971 – in the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Here, too, he enjoyed the challenge of new beginnings and Oxford has become an important centre of Jewish studies.

By no means an observant Jew, Frankel was none the less committed to the ideas of Jewish peoplehood and he dated his Zionist beliefs back to the First World War. In 1936, he went to Jerusalem to help Chaim Weizmann prepare the evidence to be presented by the Jewish Agency to the Royal Commission on Palestine chaired by Earl Peel (it eventually recommended partition of the country). Of his draft report, Frankel later wrote self-deprecatingly that Lewis Namier, another adviser, "reduced what I had written by a half without the omission of a single idea".

During and immediately after the Second World War, Frankel did much to safeguard the infant diamond-cutting production in Palestine and Israel, now a major export industry. Herbert Frankel was a man of great charm: a natural raconteur, with a remarkable memory for a telling anecdote from his varied life. He made friends easily and from all walks of life; and his friendships were long-lasting. For many years the home of Herbert and his wife, Rose, on Hinkley Hill, Oxford, was a centre of hospitality for colleagues, students, friends and family. In recent years, he continued to follow events closely and to keep his spirits high. He found a certain satisfaction in the respective achievements of Nelson Mandela and Margaret Thatcher.

Jonathan Frankel

Sally Herbert Frankel, economist; born 22 November 1903; Professor of Economics, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg 1931-46; Professor in the Economics of Underdeveloped Countries, Oxford University 1946-71 (Emeritus); married 1928 (see Frankel one son, one daughter); died 12 December 1996.



Designs which emphasise visual, rather than textual, solutions to problem solving; above, book illustration from *Listen! Listen!* (1970)

Paul Rand

Paul Rand was one of the most influential graphic designers of the 20th century. Although he is not widely known to the public, his work is universally and instantly recognisable – in particular the enduring logotypes he designed over the past 40 years for leading US corporations such as IBM and Apple.



Rand: 'the first guru of design'

Rand was born in 1914 in Brooklyn, New York. He studied at the Pratt Institute (1929-32), Parsons School of Design (1932-33) and was taught by the graphic artist George Grosz at the Arts Student League (1933-34). Establishing his own studio in 1935, he was amongst the first to initiate what would become design consultancy. He emphasised the importance of the visual element in projecting an idea or identity, where previously text had been the pre-

dominant means of conveying these messages; and with this visual element, the crucial role of the graphic designer. By 1937, aged only 23, he had achieved the position of art director of both *Esquire* and *Apparel* arts magazines. His studies into the European avant-garde art movements (among them Cubism, De Stijl, Constructivism, and the Bauhaus) significantly influenced these early years and his adaptation of their principles combined with the inspiration he derived from American culture, developed into a highly individual graphic style. Montage, collage, painting, photography and typography all found a place in his designs, which emphasised visual, rather than textual, solutions to problem solving. His sharp creative ability and skilful reading of how design should communicate through its content led him to become widely influential whilst still in his twenties.

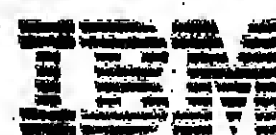
From 1941 to 1954 Rand worked for the William H. Weintraub advertising agency, where he applied his formidable design approach to advertisements. Collaborating with the copywriter Bill Bernbach he developed the integration of design and copy into a model of the "creative team" approach – bringing together a group of people to exchange ideas – and thus anticipated a move that

would change the face of advertising in the post-war years. During the 1950s, when graphic design truly evolved, with an explosion in the worlds of television, publishing and corporate identity, Rand was one of the designers who became a seminal figure. From 1955 he freelanced, becoming a graphic consultant to leading US companies, and his work had a huge influence on the development of company corporate identity and its application. IBM, Cummins Engine Company, Westinghouse, United Parcel Service, ABC Television, all benefited from his crisp, clear, concise logotypes.

His other important contribution to design was in education – he was appointed Professor of Graphic Design at Yale in 1956 and continued to lecture there for the following 36 years. His book *Thoughts on Design* (1946), illustrated with examples of his work, is regarded as a classic text on graphics, influential on successive generations of designers. This legacy can be seen in the work of many of today's eminent designers. Alan Fletcher (one of the founding members of Pentagram, the design group) considers Paul Rand to be "the first guru of design". Rand gave Fletcher, as a young designer, his first freelance work in the United States, for IBM. I was introduced to Rand's



Clear, clean, concise logos for Apple (above) and IBM (below)



work while a student, by a college tutor, Richard McConnell (whose brother, the outstanding designer John McConnell, of Pentagram, is undoubtedly a disciple of Rand's "ideas" approach to graphics). What excited me about it was that the designs were concerned with ideas and content, not just technique. This was design that encompassed both simplicity and clarity of message, by aesthetic and intellectual means, and which surpassed any notion of fashion.

It was through my own writings on design, which he encouraged, that I established a

friendship and correspondence with Rand over several years. He was unceasingly inquisitive about design in the UK (or Mersey England, as he called it) and anything related to design. His sharp wit, anecdotes and invaluable advice were a revelation to me. For a man in his seventies his acute perception of the world was that of a man of half his age.

In his later years Rand became increasingly disaffected with the vacuousness of much of contemporary graphic design, a subject for which he found expression in his brilliant book *Design, Form and Chaos* (1994). In it he wrote: "The absence of restraint, the equation of simplicity with shallowness, complexity with depth of understanding and obscurity with innovations, distinguishes the work of these times."

The last time we spoke, only a few days before he died, he was, as ever, looking to the future: the planning of a retrospective exhibition of his work to be held in New York and the publication of his latest book, *From Lascaux to Brooklyn* (1996).

Patrick Argent

Paul Rand, graphic designer; born Brooklyn, New York 1914; Professor of Graphic Design, Yale University 1956-92; married Marion Swann (one daughter); died Norwalk, Connecticut 26 November 1996.

Sir Laurens van der Post

Though his health was failing rapidly, Sir Laurens van der Post led a typically fast-paced life right through the final months of his 90th year, writes Robert Hinchey [further to the obituary by Jean-Marc Potiez, 17 December].

September saw him journeying to the Rocky Mountain heights of Boulder, Colorado, for the "Laurens van der Post Festival", four days and evenings of his films, and daily addresses to a thousand attendees on the subjects of Africa and his friend Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychologist, and reminiscences of the Blooms-

bury Group here in London of which he had been a part. Boulder also marked the premiere of a biographical film of Sir Laurens, *Flashes Slowly*, by Michael Lemle.

Back in London, he launched his new book, *The Admiral's Baby*, with readings, signings and interviews, followed shortly thereafter by a journey to one of his favourite "homes away from home", Zurich, where he was honoured with an award. Sir Laurens was generous in his giving, especially of himself, and was turned to by his friends and acquaintances frequently in times of need. When one of his

very closest friends, C.A. Meier, lay dying in Zurich last year, van der Post, in pain and poor health himself, made three journeys to Switzerland to comfort Meier in his final weeks.

Without being overly nostalgic, he loved to relate the history of places, buildings and people to his younger friends, or to take them to a restaurant serving traditional English fare. He seemed to know every building on every road in Chelsea, and to travel his back-street routes and hear his stories along the way was always a special treat. Though not a regular church-

goer he was a thoroughly religious man. In the past 15 years, his own most treasured ritual was to travel to the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City – "my parish church", as he loved to call it – to deliver the sermon on the Fourth Advent Sunday.

Alas, most of his future projects will never be realised, but one that will be *The Rock Rabbit and the Rainbow - Laurens van der Post among friends* (Dutton, Emsdale, 1997); originally conceived as a Festschrift, it evolved in the course of the past year to become an amalgam that now includes several of his

own recent essays, letters and late thoughts (expected publication date, February 1997).

The last book by Sir Laurens van der Post, writes Gopinder Panesar, was not as stated *The Admiral's Baby* but *The Secret River*, the retelling of a pan-African myth – and Sir Laurens's only children's picture book. It was published by Barefoot Books just a few weeks ago, and was of special significance to Sir Laurens, who recalled that in Africa his close friend T.C. Robertson had often described him as "one of the last of the barefoot boys".

Bringing heaven down to earth

Christmas for me is not an occasion for discussion or debate. It is time for contemplation and wonder. We enter into its meaning and mystery, it seems to me, not so much by thinking and talking about it as by the act of attention.

Consider the means by which, for most of us, Christmas has entered into our mind and imagination. Not by discussion or the reading of theological books, but by the telling and hearing of stories, by nativity plays, by poetry, by the repetition of familiar carols and hymns, by looking at pictures of the Virgin Mother and her Child.

None of these describes the mystery of Christmas in a way that is either literal or exhaustive. All are more or less allusive or symbolic. They work on us less by use of the discursive intellect (though reason is not excluded) than by attention and imagination.

I can read a story or look at a picture with or without attention. If I look for a moment and then look away, it does nothing to me. But if I listen to the story or watch the drama or look at the picture with sustained attention, and if the story or the drama or the picture has inherent power, then I shall be changed.

The story of Christmas has such power. Attention to such a story is inseparable from wonder, and wonder from love, and love from transformation. As the mystery enters my heart, or as I enter into the mystery, I find words with which to speak of it less and less adequate. As a wise man said long ago, we come at God not by knowing but by loving. And no one can love without being changed.

What is the heart of this transforming

Meanings of Christmas

The story of the birth of Christ has the power to change those who contemplate it. The Right Rev Mark Santer, Bishop of Birmingham, explains why.

mystery? It is that (in the words of St John) "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." There is a paradox here, as we can see by looking back at the prophet Isaiah:

A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades;

whereas the Word of God is eternal, the same yesterday, today and for ever. Human flesh is like grass. It grows out of the earth, it flowers for a day, and then returns to the earth from which it came. "Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes." The day of our birth is the first step on the way to our funeral. How in our trans-

ience are we to lay hold of the eternal? The saving mystery of Christmas lies in this, that the Word of God has become flesh, the eternal has revealed itself in the transient. Heaven has come down to earth and if we want to find heaven, the place to look for it is at our feet, where the child lies in the straw. There we see the wonder of the infant Word (literally, the Word that cannot speak) – as Bishop Lancelot Andrewes put it in the sermon he preached before King James I on Christmas Day 1616: "Indeed, every word is here a wonder... *verbum infans*, the Word without a word; the eternal Word not able to speak a word; a wonder sure."

Andrewes goes on to consider the swaddling clothes, the crib and the stable. So low has the Lord come. "For a stable is a place for beasts, not for Men. So low. Well may this be said to be a sign, in this sense, to wonder at. If it be well looked into, it is able to strike any man into ecstasy."

So here is the wonder: the eternal which makes itself present in time, the omnipresent in a limited space, the immortal in immortality, greatness in simplicity, the glories of heaven in the dirt and dung of a stable. There is nowhere else to look for him and, if we look elsewhere, we shall not find him.

Why then is he here, this infant, this un-

speaking Word? To point the way to heaven, which is beyond all words. Why is he here, this Word become flesh? To bring heaven down to earth, so that we, who belong to earth, may find ourselves in heaven.

That is the wonder of Christmas.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

DORMER: Peter Andrew, much-loved husband of Jane, son of Frank and Mary, died at home on 24 December, aged 4, after a long illness. Funeral at St Giles, Cripplegate, the Barbican (corner of Fore Street and Wood Street), London, at 11am, Friday 3 January, followed on Saturday by a family funeral in Norfolk. Family flowers. Donations if desired to Amnesty International or NSPCC.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

HOARE: Graham Peter. A memorial service will take place on Thursday 10 January 1997, at St Bride's Church, London, at 12 noon, to celebrate the life of Graham, who died tragically on 27 October 1996.

Announcements for **BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS** (Banns, Weddings, Births, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5UL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment presents the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am, 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.55am. (and provided by the Grenadier Guards)

Birthdays

Mr Arnold Allen, former chairman, UK Atomic Energy Authority, 72; **Mr Gordon Banks**, footballer, 59; **Mr David Bedford**, athlete, 47; **Professor Sir Roy Calne**, surgeon and immunologist, 66; **Mr Anthony Cripps QC**, 83; **Mr Gerald Davies**, controller, BBC Wales, 53; **Mr Bo Diddley**, singer, composer and guitarist, 68; **General Sir David Fraser**, former UK representative to Nato, 76; **Sir Archibald Hamilton MP**, 55; **Lord Harrington**, former deputy Speaker, House of Commons, 89; **Sir John Houghton**, former chief executive, the Meteorological Office, 65; **Lord Howick of Glendale**, a former managing director, Baring Bros, 59; **Dame Rosalinde Hurley**, microbiologist, 67; **Mr Mark Kaplan**, violinist, 43; **The Right Rev Peter Nott**, Bishop of Norwich, 63; **Mrs Gwendolen Randall**, Head, Framlingham College, 46; **Sir Albert Robinson**, former High Commissioner in the UK for Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 81; **Mr Nick Shelton**, show jumper, 39; **Lord Terrington**, former member of the Stock Exchange, 81; **Miss Tracey Ullman**, actress and comedienne, 37; **Mr David G. Wadsworth**, Chief Education Officer for Bedfordshire, 52; **Sir David Wilcock**, former director, Royal College of Music, 77; **Mr Clifford Williams**, former associate director, the Royal Shakespeare Company, 70.

Anniversaries

Births: John Philips, poet, 1676; Heinrich Kuhn (bapt), jurist, musician and composer, 1778; Heinrich Germer, pianoforte teacher and theorist, 1837; Joseph Rudyard Kipling, author and poet, 1865; Simon Guggenheim, senator and philanthropist, 1867; Stephen Butler Leacock, humorist author and economist, 1869;

Leslie Poles Hartley, novelist, 1895; **Sir Carol Reed**, film director, 1906. **Deaths:** Richard, Duke of York, killed, 1460; Pope Innocent IX, 1591; **John Turberville Needham**, priest and scientist, 1781; **Amelia Jenks Bloomer**, social reformer, 1894; **Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin**, peasant and mystic, murdered 1916; **Romain Rolland**, author, 1918; **Maurice Denon**, writer, novelist and artist, 1948; **Tyngre Halverson**, first secretary-general of the United Nations, 1968; **Richard Charles Rodgers**, composer, 1979. On this day the Yorkists suffered a defeat at the Battle of Wakefield, 1460; **Schindler**, Maharajah of Gwalior, submitted to the British, 1818; **Gilbert and Sullivan's** opera *The Pirates of Penzance* had its first performance at Paignton, Devon, 1879; **Paul Kruger** declared the Transvaal to be a republic, and became the first president, 1880; **Zululand** was annexed to Natal, 1897; **France** transferred sovereignty to Vietnam, 1949. Today is the Feast Day of St Anysia, St Anysia, St Eglew and St Sabina of Spoleto.

Builders' Company

The following have been installed as officers of the Worshipful Company of Builders:

Master: Mr David Bedford, Senior Warden, Mr John Hinchey; **Junior Warden:** Mr Stuart Tinsley.

Church appointments

The following appointments have been announced by the Church of England:

The Rev Mark Abrey, Assistant Curate, West Derby's Mary, to be Press-on-church, **Archbishop's Hospital**, Liverpool; **Canon Bernard Baker**, Curate-in-charge, **Ryle St James** (Presbyterian), to be on the staff at the Athol

Christian Training Centre (Croydon) in Roehampton, London.

The Rev David Williams, Assistant Curate, **St Andrew's**, to be on the staff at the Athol Christian Training Centre (Croydon) in Roehampton, London.

The Rev Trevor Davies, Assistant Curate (OSM), **Weston**, to be on the staff at the Athol Christian Training Centre (Croydon) in Roehampton, London.

The Rev Harry Stratton, Vicar, **Ramsay Holy Trinity** to be Vicar, **St Andrew's** (Croydon).

The Rev David Taylor, Assistant Curate, **St Andrew's** (Croydon) to be Vicar, **St Andrew's** (Croydon).

The Rev David West, Assistant Curate, **West** (Croydon) to be Vicar, **St Andrew's** (Croydon).

The Rev John Pollard, Vicar, **St Andrew's** (Croydon) to be Vicar, **St Andrew's** (Croydon).

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The big winners and losers in roller-coaster world of junior markets

The backers of the City's two junior share markets must be pleased with themselves. AIM and Oxfex have suffered only occasional hiccups and avoided the ruin of disasters predicted in so many quarters.

Of course, the two markets are chalk and cheese. AIM, or the Alternative Investment Market, is the creation of the Stock Exchange; Oxfex is the brainchild of an old-fashioned, highly experienced jobber, John Jenkins.

They evolved from the demise of two Stock Exchange-sponsored markets. AIM was seen as the successor to the old and for a long time successful Unlisted Securities Market and Oxfex appeared because of a decision to axe the old 4.2 matched tangents market.

It could be argued that Brussels influences killed the USM and the Stock Exchange was merely making the best of a bad job by introducing AIM as a replacement.

After a hesitant start, with a handful of constituents, it blossomed beyond the belief of even its greatest supporters and is nudging around 300 stocks. It has also remained free from any large calamity.

This month Greenhills, a restaurant group, acquired the dubious distinction of being the first casualty although the whereabouts of Firecrest, which lost its listing when its two sponsors retired, must be causing anxiety among its shareholders.

The last word was Firecrest could be the subject of a takeover bid from a US group with a share-trading facility.

Firecrest, which is in such glamorous activities as multi-media and Internet products, packed more into its brief, bizarre AIM existence than many fully quoted shares manage in decades.

It was boom and bust, with the shares enjoying a volatile existence. The roller-coaster

ride went from extremes of 37p to 200p. Just how much any takeover bid will be worth must be a matter of conjecture. There has even been talk of 330p a share.

A number of other AIM companies are suspended but there seem reasonable hopes the shares will return to market, although shareholder dilution looks likely.

The successes of the junior market include Abacus Recruitment, Surrey Free Inns and Pan Andean Resources. Abacus is standing at an 84.5p peak after a dramatic profits recovery. It was founded as an accountancy agency but has spread into such activities as providing catering staff.

Surrey Free Inns, at a 412p peak, has scored a hit with its Litter Tree superplum concept. It is seen as vulnerable to a takeover strike, with Regent Inns and Yates Brothers Wine Lodges the mostly likely predators.



Pan Andean, despite the shock of a dry well which the world and its dog had regarded as a surefire success, can still muster a ride from 17.5p to

51.5p. Mind you, when the excitement over its Bolivian involvement was at its peak, the shares soared to 135.5p.

The big success story Oxfex includes Display IT Holdings, which has produced a rival to the Reuters financial screens, Motion Media, with video telephones, and Robotic Technology, with robot grinding systems.

It is not surprising that such a lightly regulated market has suffered a few highly forgettable experiences. SkyNet, supplying vehicle information systems, had an unbelievable run - and that is exactly what it turned out to be.

The shares romped from 27.5p to 275p when it was

STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Share spotlight

about to move to AIM. But then the AIM move failed to materialise as questions were asked about the rampant Oxfex share price. Oxfex then decided to suspend the shares.

The AIM float was geared to raising £2m. The company has since made a £2m debenture issue and drawn down £900,000. It is now talking about further cash-raising which will involve a rights issue and another debenture.

Services Direct is another Oxfex casualty. Joint administrators have put together a rescue package for the skin care group. The shares remain suspended at 60p.

Woodstock, a pubs and restaurants group, is also suspended. It was floated by stockbroker Austin Friars Securities at 20p in July when it pulled in £500,000. The company then changed its name to Austin Friars Securities and a pub restaurant, the Blenheim at St John's Wood in London.

In November the shares, down to 15p, were suspended. Woodstock's board, it was stated, had "recently become aware of certain financial irregularities" within its Kingston Inn offshoot. Theo came the bombshell. Woodstock said Kingston had defaulted on its obligations to Bass, the brewing giant, which had put in a receiver. The restaurant arm, it was stated, continued to trade satisfactorily. Group chairman Richard Flatau resigned.

The company promised a "further detailed announcement in the very near future prior to a resumption in the trading of the shares". For a business to run into such problems so quickly after its Oxfex launch must be of considerable concern to Mr Jenkins and his team. The Oxfex contingent and investors Austin Friars Securities may also care to ponder that investors who supported the flotation have yet

to hear a word directly from Woodstock.

The announcements chronicling the problems have been made on the Oxfex screen and through newspapers, such as *The Independent*. It is time the company explained itself to shareholders who, among other things, remain unaware of the identity of the new chairman, whether anything will be salvaged from the Kingston problems, what impact they will have on the other part of the group and how such a disaster can overwhelm a company so quickly after professionals have poured over its prospectus figures.

Let's hope Oxfex and Austin Friars Securities insist Woodstock writes to shareholders soon. It would be a pity if a few poor performers are allowed to tarnish a market which is well run and serves the useful purpose of providing a share trading facility for many firms the Exchange chafes to ignore.

Alcoholic Beverages				Banks, Merchant				Banks, Retail				Beverages, Pubs & Rest				Building/Construction				Building Materials				Chemicals				Health Care				Household Goods				Insurance				Internationals				Leisure & Hobbies				Life Assurance				Medicine				Pharmaceuticals				Printing & Paper				Property				Government Securities																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													
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business & city

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OFT turns up heat over code of practice



Sue Slipman: 'Important to stamp out the cowboys'

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The gas and electricity industry regulators are facing pressure from the Office of Fair Trading to come up with a tough enforceable code of practice aimed at stamping out dubious sales tactics by rival suppliers in the move towards full domestic competition planned for 1998.

The OFT, the UK's overall competition watchdog, is to bring together the gas watchdog, Ofgas, and its counterpart in the electricity industry, Ofwat, at a private conference in January to discuss how a binding joint

code could be developed. The move follows pressure from the Gas Consumers Council to replace a controversial voluntary code produced by the gas industry, which even some independent suppliers have claimed was too weak.

It comes six weeks before the second large trial of household gas competition begins in the south of England. Some 1.5 million homes will be able to choose an alternative supplier to British Gas for the first time in Dorset, the former county of Avon, Kent and Sussex.

Sue Slipman, director of the Gas Consumers Council

(GCC), said she believed Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, had now accepted that Ofgas should play a bigger role in developing and publishing an enforceable code of conduct.

Previously Ms Spottiswoode has argued that marketing was a matter for the OFT and local trading standards officers.

However Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity watchdog, is already believed to be in favour of a binding code of practice, with Ofwat as the enforcement agency.

Ms Slipman explained: "I think it's now imperative that we have an enforceable code to put

the public's mind at rest and stamp out cowboy selling tactics. We need to sort this thing out before the second phase of competition comes in."

Eastern Gas, part of the Hanson group, recently faced criticism from the GCC and Ofgas following complaints about its doorstep marketing tactics in Kent. Some representatives of the company had allegedly told potential customers that British Gas was changing its name to "Eastern".

One independent domestic supplier competing in the trials, Calor, has so far refused to sign up to a voluntary code of

practice on the grounds that it does not go far enough. Another, Amerasia Hess, has backed the GCC in pushing for a much tougher legally enforceable code.

Ofgas said the issue depended on the outcome of the OFT conference in the new year. "We're concerned that competition is being introduced fairly and that customers are not being hoodwinked. But you should wait and see what happens at the Office of Fair Trading conference. I'm not saying we won't take a stronger line but we are not ready to do that at the moment."

Ofgas is under attack from big industrial gas customers over a separate industry code of practice which suggests it will take much longer to change from one supplier to another. A copy of the internal code, seen by *The Independent*, says the process of changing suppliers is likely to take three months.

A spokeswoman for the Energy Intensive Users Group, with representatives including ICI and British Steel, said: "This is just unacceptable. The suppliers have come up with this code of practice because things are in such a mess, but haven't consulted companies about it."



Clare Spottiswoode: Ofgas should have a bigger role

Firms face sanctions over pensions

Nic Cicutti

Thousands of small and medium-sized firms could face fines and other legal sanctions through failing to implement provisions within the new Pensions Act in April 1997, a leading firm of benefit consultants warned yesterday.

Among the most common likely problems will be the failure to give members the option to nominate trustees, to appoint auditors to pension schemes, maintain up-to-date accounts and keep separate bank accounts for trustees.

Johnstone Douglas, a pay and benefits firm which advises companies on how to convert their pension funds from final salary to money-purchase schemes, yesterday blamed lack of time for the problem.

But Doug Johnstone, the company's managing director, added that he was concerned at the low levels of understanding by many firms of the changes that need to be implemented when the Pensions Act comes into force.

He said: "From our own experience, we believe that almost 90 per cent of small and medium-sized firms have not yet taken advice on the implications of the new legislation, and simply do not understand what needs to be done."

"There is a real danger that they are going to fail to comply by default. This will potentially affect many thousands of members of company schemes."

The deadline next April follows the passing by Parliament of the 1995 Pensions Act, sparked by the disappearance of more than £400m in pension funds belonging to past and present staff of companies owned by Robert Maxwell, the former media tycoon. His death in November 1991 and the hunt for the missing money sparked the Government's pension reforms.

The new Pensions Act, which many experts point out would

not have prevented the Maxwell pensioners' money from disappearing, nevertheless imposes onerous conditions on new pension schemes.

Among the changes required under the Act are new requirements for contracting out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme, or Serps.

Company pension schemes will also be required to pay a levy to cover the cost of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), the funds' watchdog, together with financing the new compensation scheme. The maximum cost for existing members of company schemes was recently set by the Government on a sliding scale whereby smaller schemes pay more.

In 1997-1998, the annual levy for the regulator will cost between £6 per member in schemes with 10,000 or more members, rising to £1.05 per person for schemes between 12 and 99 members. The maximum compensation levy will be 23 per person a year.

Oliver Heald, the Social Security Minister who announced the charges, said: "I believe we have struck the right balance between the security for each scheme and costs that come with that security."

However, the Act has been criticised for the unnecessary expense and bureaucracy involved in administering it, plus a new minimum funding requirement, which some experts predict could lead to higher employers' contributions.

Despite recent government figures showing that few firms have so far switched out of complicated, and potentially expensive, final-salary pension schemes, experts believe the trickle will turn into a flood after April, when the Act comes into force.

Mr Johnstone said: "There is a real danger [firms] are going to fail to comply [with the Act] by default and Opra may then step in to impose fines."



Striking it rich: Combined oil and gas tax revenues were estimated to have reached £54m a day in November

£20bn bonanza forecast from North Sea oil

Nic Cicutti

North Sea oil and gas revenues will contribute more than £20bn to the Exchequer over the next six years, according to unpublished forecasts by the Inland Revenue.

The Revenue expects North Sea revenues to reach £4.1bn during the 1997-98 tax year, falling off slightly to £3.4bn by the year 2001-2002.

The figures come as a separate report by Royal Bank of Scotland, issued today, showed that provisional estimates of combined oil and gas tax revenues for November reached £54m per day, 21 per cent up on the same month in 1995.

The Revenue's forecast for future tax income, issued yesterday by the Scottish National Party, is based on output remaining at similar levels to today, while oil and gas prices stay broadly as at present.

Tax revenues are structured to take a larger proportion of any increase in the price of oil and gas. This year oil prices have surged from \$18 to around \$24 a barrel, taking the industry by surprise.

The SNP said a study by the University of Aberdeen, published in November showed that for each US\$1 increase in the price of a barrel of oil, the Government receives an extra

50 per cent in revenue. At \$16 a barrel, oil revenue alone between 1997 and 2000 will be almost £11bn, rising to £18bn if oil reaches \$22 a barrel.

Nicola Sturgeon, SNP energy spokeswoman and prospective parliamentary candidate in Glasgow Govan, said: "These figures confirm the massive contribution that Scotland's energy wealth will continue to make to the London Treasury."

"It is all the more staggering when you consider that Labour and Tory politicians in the 1970s told [us] that the oil would not last 10 years. It was their way of making sure that we did not get any ambitious ideas."

Ms Sturgeon added that the revenue assumptions, which were part of the Inland Revenue's Budget calculations, were underpinned by a government statement that oil and gas reserves will last for the next 55 years. The SNP demand for Scottish independence meant these resources could be used to meet Scotland's priorities.

The Revenue figures come as a report by Royal Bank of Scotland, but later today, shows that UK gas and oil production rose to its highest level since October 1995. Provisional estimates of the daily combined oil and gas revenues show they were about £9.4m a day ahead of the November 1995 total.

Textile makers decide whether to throw in towel

Chris Godsmark

European textile manufacturers will decide this week whether to abandon their long-running legal battle against UK government aid for a controversial Taiwanese factory due to be built in Northern Ireland, following a recent defeat in the European Court.

Associations representing leading textile producers including Coats Vytella and Courtaulds Textiles are thought to

have so far spent some £60,000 fighting the £157m project planned by the Taiwanese Hualon Corporation.

Their objections have been on the grounds that it will create huge unnecessary production capacity in an industry which has already been drastically slimmed down.

To the outrage of existing textile companies, the Government has agreed to provide £61m in subsidies for the plant which will be built on a green-

field site in a deprived area north of Belfast and is planned to create 1,800 jobs.

Earlier this month the industry umbrella-group, the European Association for Apparel and Textiles, lost a European Court challenge against the decision by the European Commission to clear the aid package. Judges said no rules had been broken by the Commission when it approved the state aid.

Brussels-based lawyers acting

for the European producers have been examining the judgment and are likely to ask the court for further clarification. John Wilson, director general of the British Apparel and Textiles Confederation, said he had been deeply disappointed by the judgment and was discussing the way forward with his counterparts on the Continent.

He explained: "The court seems to be suggesting that because Hualon say that is what they are going to do then we

should not contest it. That seems crazy to me. We are looking at several aspects of the ruling though there don't seem to be any points of law we can contest."

If the producers decide against an appeal it would provide a boost for Northern Ireland's Industrial Development Board (IDB), the government agency for inward investment, and clear the way for the plant's construction three years after the original announcement.

However, there are signs that the IDB is reviewing the scale of the aid package, which depends on the full number of jobs being created. The IDB's chief executive visited Taiwan earlier this month and is believed to have discussed the subsidy with Hualon.

Mr Wilson insisted the campaign mounted by producers had not been a total failure. It had succeeded in delaying the project and highlighted the crisis affecting the industry.

Call to replace Cadbury and Greenbury codes

Roger Trapp

The Cadbury and Greenbury codes on executive pay and corporate governance should be replaced by a clearer framework allowing businesses to be transparent and accountable about their values, an influential group of companies will urge today.

This would include heads of companies setting out consistently where their business is going, what it stands for, where success is expected to come from, who is crucial to the achievement of that success

and what could stop it from happening.

The recommendations are published by the Centre for Tomorrow's Company in its evidence to the Hampel Committee on Corporate Governance, the successor to the Cadbury Committee.

The Centre, formed earlier this year by a group of businesses, says widespread adoption of this approach would create a common language of accountability and provide a framework for measuring and communicating present performance and future prospects.

It would also overcome one of the key causes of public cynicism about business - the tendency to have different messages for different audiences.

In its submission, the centre urges that the basis of the framework should be the agenda for action produced by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce's Tomorrow's Company Inquiry.

The centre's evidence in the Hampel Committee, which has taken over from the Cadbury Committee, is also a response to a "climate audit" carried

out among leading chief executives and chairmen by Greenly's, a management consultancy focusing on boardroom issues.

It found that there was widespread support for Cadbury and a more negative view of Greenbury, which was seen as a "knee-jerk response to public outcry". But even with Cadbury there was concern that it encouraged a "box-ticking, bureaucratic mentality".

BT's Sir Iain Vallance, for instance, is quoted by the research as likening the governance rules to the highway code and saying

the important thing is to reach the point "where you don't ignore it but simply act naturally in its observance".

Martin Taylor of Barclays is reported regretting that the Cadbury code had prompted non-executive directors to concentrate on the "policing function of their role rather than the encouraging, visionary aspect of the role."

The submission also urges the Hampel Committee to remind all listed companies that their legal duty is to the company as a whole and not to the holders of shares at any one time.



Martin Taylor: Visionary aspect to be encouraged

Labour hits at UK sell-off

Nic Cicutti

Almost two-thirds of all inward investment into the UK in 1995 involved existing British businesses being taken over by foreign companies, the Labour Party claimed yesterday.

Of the £14bn invested in the UK last year, about £8.5bn, or some 60 per cent, came from takeovers. These included the sale of Seaboard, the regional electricity company, for £1.6bn to US utility Central & South West and the acquisition of South Western Electricity by Southern Company of Georgia for £1.1bn.

Stephen Byers, Labour's shadow employment minister, said: "The Tories constantly claim the UK attracts inward investment because we have no minimum wage and have opted out of the Social Chapter."

"These figures show such claims are misleading and are simply deceiving the British people... the reality is that the majority of inward investment comes from foreign investors making their pickings of what is left of British industry."

"Our nation's assets are being sold abroad, with profits being siphoned off overseas. The Government applauds this as inward investment - what a misuse of the English language."

Labour's survey, taken from official UK Balance of Payments statistics and a parliamentary answer by Greg Knight, the Trade Minister, shows that since 1985, the proportion of inward investment resulting from takeovers has risen steadily from 15 per cent to 60 per cent last year.

The figures come days after the US power generator, Cal Energy, won its bitterly contested £782m hostile takeover bid for Northern Electric. Other recent foreign takeovers of British companies include the agreed £1.3bn bid for East Midlands Electricity by Dominik Resources, the Virginian power supplier, Trafalgar House's acquisition by Kvaerner, the Scandinavian conglomerate, for more than £900m and the recommended deal for London Electricity by New Orleans-based Entergy for £1.3bn.

Analysts believe the inevitable further restructuring of UK utilities will lead to thousands of job cuts, although this would have been inevitable in respect of who owned the companies concerned.

Mr Byers said: "The Government is constantly claiming that inward investment creates jobs in Britain. That is certainly not the case when utilities are taken over by foreign firms."

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1995 High	1995 Low	1995 High	1995 Low	1995 High	1995 Low
FTSE 100	3091.00	+13.2	+0.3	3092.50	2632.30	3.88			
FTSE 250	4470.50	+22.1	+0.5	4588.60	4015.30	3.53			
FTSE 350	2031.10	+7.4	+0.4	2031.10	1816.60	3.81			
FTSE SmallCap	2169.21	+10.6	+0.5	2244.35	1954.06	3.28			
FTSE All-Share	2001.16	+7.4	+0.4	2001.16	1781.95	3.77			
New York	6560.91	+75.5	+1.2	6560.91	5032.91	2.04			
Tokyo	19269.04	-321.4	-1.6	22666.80	19181.71	0.82			
Hong Kong	13404.14	+272.7	+2.1	13530.95	10204.97	3.11			
Frankfurt	2952.88	-1.6	-0.1	2909.91	2253.36	1.61			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates					US interest rates				
Bank of England paid curve 0-30 year yield (%) 					Fed Reserve paid curve 0-30 year bond yield (%) 				
<small>* All policies are market interest rates. Source: Merrill</small>									
Money Market Rates					Bond Yields *				
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)			Year Ago	Long Bond	Q3 Year	
UK	6.13	6.94	7.50	7.42	7.57	7.57			
US	5.59	5.75	6.34	5.64	6.58	5.99			
Japan	0.38	0.44	2.55	2.85	-	-			
Germany	3.06	3.19	5.80	6.03	6.69	6.85			
<small>* Government's indices</small>									
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Rices - Top 5			Falls - Top 5			W's Day 1st % Chg			
Price	12/12	12/12	Price	12/12	12/12	Price	12/12	12/12	
Soft Brown Peas	815	72.5	9.8	Brazil Sugar	549.5	208	2		
Perland Grain	97.5	7.5	8.3	Durum Wheat	547.6	26			
Buckeye Indul	890	70	7.9	Other Sugar	39.8	1.8			

Wanted: a warts-and-all tally of UK's jobless

JOHN PHILPOTT

'Politicians will realise the electorate wants openness, not illusion. For now, let's raise a toast and wish a happy New Year and good job-hunting to Britain's 1.9 million unemployed. Or should that be 4 million?'

New Year 1997, the last Hogmanay before the hustings. We all know politicians are lousy at keeping promises but they can at least make resolutions. And what better than to resolve to reform Britain's approach to measuring unemployment. To some this may seem a rather arcane suggestion for the festive season, the kind of thing that provides a turn-out for none save a few sad snorers.

However, when one reflects on the extent to which key macro-economic and employment policy decisions are based on job statistics, the importance of a clear picture of unemployment becomes self-evident. Yet, at present, the picture is anything but clear.

The Government may applaud the downward path in unemployment, which has taken the monthly count of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance below the politically sensitive 2 million mark. But the claimant count is widely mistrusted.

In 1995, the Royal Statistical Society called for a new monthly count to be derived from the 60,000 household based Labour Force

Survey (LFS) which provides a measure of unemployment based on an internationally agreed definition of what constitutes an unemployed jobseeker. But the LFS is conducted on a quarterly basis and the Treasury has ruled out the extra £8m a year needed to upgrade it (the Chancellor's fiscal rectitude on this matter being backed up by ministers at the Department for Education and Employment who, with the general election on their minds, are concerned by the fact that the level of unemployment as measured by the LFS is around 200,000 higher than the claimant count).

However, even if the Treasury were to relent, it is not clear whether the LFS measure alone is a totally reliable indicator of the extent of slack in the jobs market. For example, the standard LFS measure excludes people on the margins of the workforce who tell the LFS that they want jobs and might enter the market in good times. Moreover, the standard LFS measure may well understate the social distress caused by unemployment. Although derived from a

household survey, it measures unemployed individuals, whereas the social distress caused by unemployment may well depend upon the distribution of joblessness across households.

What is required, therefore, is a range or spectrum of unemployment measures that, when considered together, can provide a truly rounded account of Britain's unemployment problem.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics adopted such an approach in 1976 and, following a modification made in 1995, publishes six measures of unemployment based on its monthly equivalent of the LFS.

Now that the need for a range of inflation measures has been accepted in Britain - with the Treasury publishing RPI, RPIX and RPI-X - why not also adopt the US-style spectrum approach to measuring unemployment?

This was precisely the question posed earlier this year by the House of Commons Select Committee on Employment, which called for a new approach to compiling the jobless figures. But the Government rejected this call, merely responding that it would be "keeping under review the need for more informative reporting of unemployment measures".

Even with this official reticence, the Employment Policy Institute (EPI) has decided to construct its own range of unemployment measures in conjunction with the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics. These are published quarterly as part of a regular and wide-ranging Employment Audit of government jobs figures.

The EPI joblessness indicators - U1 to U5, available for the summer 1996 quarter - are shown in the chart. Although US thinking has influenced the EPI's approach the EPI indicators have been designed with the British labour market in mind. The first three

indicators focus on labour market slack. U1 is the standard measure of unemployment provided by the LFS and covers all economically active jobseekers. U2 includes in addition so-called "discouraged workers", ie people who do not seek jobs because they feel there are no jobs available.

U3 adds to the numbers in U1 and U2 those whose response to the LFS is merely that they want a job. This indicator includes all the people marginally attached to the labour market who might enter the market in buoyant times. It could be said to approximate to the number of jobs needed to create "full employment" in Britain.

The last three indicators are more akin to measures of social distress. U4 refers to the duration of job search and measures people who have been unemployed for more than six months. U5 moves away from an individually-based joblessness indicator to a household-based one.

U5a measures individuals living in households where no adult has a job, while U5b measures households where no adult has a job. The indicator excludes households where the head of household is beyond retirement age and those containing only students.

What do these indicators tell us about current levels of joblessness? Well, for a start, U3 shows that the number of jobless people who say they want a job is not the 1.9 million registered by the claimant count, but well over 4 million. Of course, caveats abound. There are undoubtedly people measured by U3 whose desire for work is not matched by any form of realism about the type of work jobs they are likely to get. But U3 none the less points to a considerable "job shortfall" in Britain.

U1-U4 do broadly reflect the trend fall in unemployment registered by the claimant count. However, with regard to the "social distress" indicator U5, there has been no sign

of any corresponding reduction in the number of workless households. These account for almost one in five of all British households - up from well below one in ten 20 years ago. Between the summer of 1994 and the summer of 1995 - the latest quarter for which U5 can be constructed - the number of such households increased by 250,000.

The EPI has an open mind on whether U1 to U5 are the most appropriate indicators and how they might be developed. Their purpose is as much to stimulate debate on a new approach as it is to offer the final word on measuring unemployment.

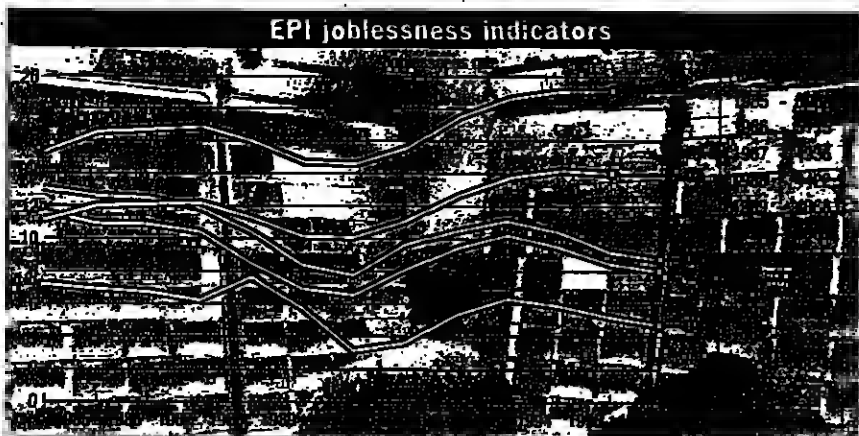
What is clear from these indicators, however, is that large numbers of jobless people, particularly those living in workless households, cannot find work even after four years of recovery in the labour market.

There is an urgent need for further policies to help them; and good policy-making requires a complete picture of the underlying jobs scene. In the short term, of course, it will be politically expedient for the present government to focus on the "good news" from the claimant count.

And there is as yet no guarantee that a Labour government would necessarily want to provide the British people with a warts-and-all account of the jobs market.

However, sooner or later the penny will drop and politicians will realise that what the electorate wants is openness, not illusion. For now, let's raise a toast and wish a happy New Year and good job-hunting to Britain's 1.9 million unemployed. Or should that be 4 million?

The writer is director of the Employment Policy Institute, an independent think-tank. The EPI Employment Audit is available as a quarterly subscription publication, priced p.u. from Employment Policy Institute, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SU.



Pearson's eyeball-counter focuses on a bigger prize

It has emphatically not been a good year for Pearson, the £7bn media and financial services conglomerate. But it hasn't been a half-bad one for the man who runs Europe's largest independent producer, Pearson Television - Greg Dyke.

Consider that Grundy Worldwide, the makers of *Neighbours*, produces soaps and game shows in Germany, Holland, Sweden and Italy and ten other countries. Or that Thames, makers of *The Bill*, are supplying popular programmes to ITV, cable and satellite channels and Channel 4. Or that SelectTV, the production company, is starting to export its award-winning formats to international markets, on the strength of hits like *Birds of a Feather*, *Lovejoy*, *Shine on Harvey Moon* and *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*.

"Two-thirds of our profits and half our revenues now come from overseas," Mr Dyke points out proudly. Revenues in the half-year ending June 1996 were £100m, up 66 per cent year on year. In 1997, the stakes get even higher, with the launch of the new Channel 5, in which Pearson Television has a 24 per cent stake, and for which it is a privileged supplier. Pearson as a whole is a different story. Uneven profit performance, bad acquisition judgement, and mounting criticism over its corporate strategy have fuelled a year of takeover speculation, and the early departure of the chairman and the managing director.

The differing fortunes of the group and one of its leading subsidiaries is, one suspects, behind Mr Dyke's year-long refusal to do a major interview in the business press. Those close to him say he was just getting on with the job. But Pearson insiders

concede he was keeping his head down for another reason. Why annoy management at head office, who were fighting off unwanted attention, takeover talk and poisons from analysts, by appearing to take public credit for Pearson Television's stellar performance?

The silence was all the more necessary when speculation began to grow about Mr Dyke's fervent wish to form a buyout group to purchase the television subsidiary. Pearson, which is in the midst of a wide-ranging rethink about its strategy, has not ruled out the idea of spinning Pearson Television off to shareholders, or even selling it.

Mr Dyke, a man of enormous

attempt to diversify into the CD-Rom and electronic games market, through Mindscape of the US, brought nothing but misery to the management that masterminded the acquisition.

Last week, Mr Dyke re-surfaced. In an exclusive interview with *The Independent*, he happily discussed his wide range of responsibilities - Thames Television, SelectTV, and particularly Grundy Worldwide, the production company bought for £175m 18 months ago, as Mr Dyke's first big corporate move.

But he would not comment on the arguably more fascinating behind-the-scenes developments at corporate head office, not least the departure

to give him what he wants - Pearson Television? The coming year will tell.

Meanwhile, Mr Dyke professes to like what he is doing. He likes the risk and the rewards of taking Pearson into international markets, exploiting a stable of rights to popular programmes. "I'd rather be a rights-owner than a broadcaster," he declares, in what might be taken as his mantra.

In the future, Mr Dyke says, broadcasters will be less important. The real value will be generated by those who own the programmes. Fragmenting audiences, the launch of digital TV and the growing demand for cheap, plentiful shows will conspire to give Pearson Television an advantage.

So why aren't the traditional broadcasters doing the same thing? "I can say that it is not the kind of business that encourages you to take risks," Mr Dyke says. "We have known about the challenges of digital, of rights, of new competition in broadcasting, and the need to expand overseas and on the Continent. But not one of them has done anything."

The other problem is that the traditional broadcasters are too stuck in their old ways. In the UK, you are not applauded for the popular programmes. The production process was captured by the intellectual elite.

In the end, the logic of the changes in UK television will mean broadcasters will want to expand more aggressively into programme-making and rights acquisition.

The monopoly is crumbling and broadcasters will have to own their product.

Mr Dyke has thought it all through. "As broadcasting frag-



Changing channels: Greg Dyke believes that the logic of change in UK television will mean that broadcasters will want to expand more aggressively into programme-making and rights acquisition

ments, it becomes harder and harder to hold on to brands. The ones with the good names are worth their weight in gold. You couldn't afford to build *The Bill* from scratch today. Building the name will get harder.

"I guess what I am saying is that, logically, broadcasters need to look at owning a company like Pearson Television."

That's as close as he will come to conceding the company could well be bought one day, and not necessarily by him.

Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB has already looked carefully, aware it needs to develop a true pres-

ence in British programming if it is to reduce its huge programme acquisition budget.

The big challenge in 1997 will be to get Channel 5 right. Mr Dyke will become chairman of Channel 5 Broadcasting in the New Year, and has been taking a close interest in the preparations for launch.

He has had to live down his infamous contention that the controversial door-to-door returning exercise - necessary to ensure VCRs don't suffer interference from the signal - was nothing less than a "burglar's charter". That was the most ex-

pensive comment I ever made," he says. "Just look at the security features we had to build in as a result of that quote!"

He says that he is unbothered by the rocketing costs of returning, now estimated at £180m compared to just £55m in the Pearson-led Channel 5 bid. Part of that stems from the addition of 4 million new homes in areas that originally could not have received the signal.

"The extra returning costs are not a problem for the shareholders, because the more eyeballs there are, the more money we can make," Mr Dyke says.

Not a bad set of challenges to keep a chief executive busy. A new channel, global acquisitions, the prospect of digital television by the end of 1997. And in the midst of it all, a radical restructuring of Mr Dyke's parent company, perhaps even the demerger of the television operations.

Mr Dyke may be counting eyeballs for the new Channel 5, but his own eyes look focused on the bigger prize: growing Pearson Television, and one day perhaps owning part of it.

Matthew Horsman

Underwriter to float on AIM

All Treason

Hardy Underwriting Group, a Lloyd's of London underwriter, will join the Alternative Investment Market today in a £10.65m flotation.

While a few of the larger underwriters have stock market quotations, Hardy is unusual because it underwrites just one syndicate which is known as 382. Peter Hardy, chief executive of Hardy Underwriting Group, said the listing could pave the way for other small underwriters. "I'm sure a lot of people are watching us. We were rather surprised we were first," he said.

Mr Hardy added the flotation was designed to encourage new names into the syndicate because they would know how they could easily get in and out.

The complicated transaction involves Hardy Underwriting Group merging with Hardy Underwriting Agencies, the managing agent of syndicate 382. Hardy Underwriting

Group will provide about 25 per cent, or £16m, of the underwriting capacity of syndicate 382 in 1997.

"Syndicate 382 has been one of the more consistently profitable syndicates at Lloyd's and has an underwriting team which has worked together for many years," Mr Hardy said. He has been the active underwriter for the syndicate since its formation in 1975.

The syndicate, a specialist in helicopter insurance as well as other aviation and marine underwriting, managed to maintain positive results in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Lloyd's average slumped into negative territory.

Hardy Underwriting Group set up the first corporate name under the "interavailability rules".

These allow names to convert from unlimited liability underwriting to a limited liability corporate vehicle, while using assets which Lloyd's holds on names' behalf.

IN BRIEF

• The Institute of Directors has stepped up its attack on the possibility of Britain joining the single European currency in its New Year message to the organisation's 37,000 members. Tim Melville-Ross, IOD director-general, said UK participation in economic and monetary union would seriously damage competitiveness. He went on: "A decision to join a single currency in 1997 or at any other time in the foreseeable future would so constrain our economic freedom as to make it virtually impossible for us to compete successfully. We must continue to pursue our own independent economic policy within the single market."

• Venture capitalists seeking to invest in potential management buyouts are facing mounting financial hurdles, according to a survey by accountants KPMG. It says boom conditions in the market continued last year, with the total value of buyouts and buy-ins up from £5.7bn to £6.7bn, though the value of deals worth more than £10m each fell slightly. The number of deals recorded increased to 600 from 560 in 1995. However, Mike Stevens, head of MBOs at KPMG, said buyouts were becoming more expensive due to strong competition among venture capitalists. "It is becoming increasingly difficult to find underpriced deals and there is always the danger of institutions overpaying in the race to win trophy buyouts. But with inflation and interest rates remaining subdued, the real rates of return offered by MBOs - albeit at a higher risk - are still attractive."

• Biff, the banking union, called on MPs to amend a Private Bill allowing the formal merger between Lloyds Bank and TSB to include a clause giving customers the power to keep branches open. Biff claimed that without such an amendment 650 branches might close and up to 10,000 jobs lost, in addition to the 1,000 head office posts that are to go because of the merger of head office functions.

• B&Q, the DIY giant owned by Kingfisher Group, confirmed that it is to create 1,800 jobs at five new warehouse outlets around the country, half of them part-time posts. The outlets will open in Coventry, Wallasey, in Merseyside; Bury, near Manchester; and Stockton-on-Tees, in Cleveland.

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Pick of the Day

Element of Doubt

9pm ITV

Pretty good corn is this thriller by David Pirie, the sort of corn, in fact, that's just right for the time of year. Nigel Havers, an actor who hasn't been much in evidence of late, turns up playing one of his charming rascals - this one a smiling but irresponsible property speculator who suddenly and suspiciously turns into a perfect husband to Gina McKee (she of *Our Friends in the North* fame). Switch off and enjoy.



Film of the Day

Brief Encounter

4.50pm BBC2

Noel Coward probably had as much idea of what it was to be a middle-class British in the middle of the 20th century as you and I do - but somehow his screen version (directed by David Lean) of his play *Still Life* emerges as moving and true - if condescending. The film is made by the presence of Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard as the forbidden lovers. Cyril Raymond is also good as Johnson's stolid husband.

Today's television and radio

BBC 1

- 7.00 News, Weather (2431301). 7.10 Joe 90 (7945100). 7.30 The Day After Tomorrow (1505585). 8.00 News, Weather (5059740).
8.10 Children's BBC: Barney. 8.15 Peter Pan. * 8.35 The Legend of Prince Valiant.
9.00 News, Regional News and Weather (3638092). * 9.05 Children's BBC: Incredible Games. 9.30 Record Breakers. * 10.00 Playdays. 10.20 William's Wish Wellingtons.
10.30 The Barefoot Executive (Robert Butler 1971 US). Disney offering about a chimp which can guess which TV shows will get good ratings (some sort of satirical, one supposed) and starring a young Kurt Russell (2380530).
12.05 The Muppets (2149894). 12.30 Wipeout (97553). 1.00 News and Weather (59176856). * 1.13 Local News and Weather (82675450). 1.15 Neighbours (5864527). 1.35 Neighbours: 10th Anniversary Special (7246547). 2.15 The World's Strongest Man (196491).
2.45 The Boy Who Could Fly (Nick Castle 1986 US). As the title says. Kiddie fare starring Jay Underwood and Bernie Bedell (595244).
4.30 Children's BBC: The World of Peter Rabbit and Friends. 4.55 Newsround Review of the Year. * 5.25 The Biz.
5.50 Neighbours (3620905). * 6.15 News and Weather (430112). * 6.30 Regional News Magazine (696769). 6.45 Winter on One BBC self-plug (S) (485740). 6.50 This is Your Life (S) (488653). *
7.30 A Monkey for All Seasons. David Attenborough meets Japan's macaque monkeys, the world's most northerly primate (R) (S) (189). *
8.00 EastEnders. Grant and Tiffany marriage meltdown (S) (5011). *
8.30 Cheff Rochelle invites Gareth to Paris (S) (1818). * 9.00 News. Local News, Weather (581234). * 9.50 Death Becomes Her (Robert Zemeckis 1992 US). Present and former loves of plastic surgeon Bruce Willis - Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn - blithely out in this enjoyable enough special effects extravaganza. The SFx are courtesy of the fact that witch (Isabella Rossellini) knows the secret of eternal youth and beauty (S) (862585). *
11.05 Review 96. Justin Webb reviews the year's major news stories (S) (531382).
12.25 Mrs Merton Show Christmas Special. Faux-senior citizen-cum-actress show hostess Catherine Arlone talks to Slade Ironstone Noddy Holder and Irish singer Daniel O'Donnell (R) (S) (2823290).
12.55 Billion Dollar Brain (Ken Russell 1967 UK). Russell managed to kill off the Michael Caine/Harry Palmer espionage series (following on from the *James Bond* and *Funeral in Berlin*) by making it so cinema-heavy that audiences couldn't really take it. What was going on (something about a special assignment) (F) (S) (258332). *
2.40 Weather (8509035). To 2.45am.

BBC 2

- 7.10 The Phil Silvers Show (R) (7936450). 7.35 Going Hollywood (R) (5976189).
8.50 Command Decision (Sam Wood 1948). Clark Gable stars as an Allied officer assigned the task of bombing strategic targets deep within Germany. Walter Pidgeon and Van Johnson fasten their seatbelts (40537769).
10.40 Eisenhower, Soldier. First in a two-parter about the soldier-President (8559769).
11.45 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. More from Professor Simon Conway Morris about the history of life on Earth (S) (778030).
12.45 Clash of the Titans. Cleopatra's 1961 Ashes series (S) (3854547). *
1.25 The Essential Olympics. Recalls the Olympic Games from 1968 to 1992 (8183586).
2.45 The Car's the Star. The Triumph Herald (R) (S) (3878653). *
3.05 Great Railway Journeys. From Derry to Kerry with Michael Palin (R) (S) (2872924). *
4.00 Love on a Branch Line. 1/4. Another chance to see this enjoyable period comedy drama based on John Hadfield's novel, and starring Michael Maloney and Leslie Phillips (R) (S) (5813465). *
4.50 The First Great Train Robbery (Michael Crichton 1978 US). Seven G-men and Donald Sutherland plan to rob a British Army payroll train during the Crimean War in this attempt to recreate the *Butch Cassidy* and the *Sundance Kid* mixture of comedy and excitement (S) (58191672). *
3.20 News (7554924). 3.25 Local News (7553295). 3.30 Big Foot (Danny Huston 1987 US). Two children on a camping trip are captured by a pair of eight-foot ape-like creatures, who are in turn being pursued by ruthless hunters. Disney tale directed by the son of John Huston (6273585). *
5.10 Home and Away Special (R) (S) (7710837). *
5.40 News, Weather (432837). *
5.55 Your Show (R) (533382). *
6.00 London Tonight (Followed by Weather) (721). *
6.30 London Bridge (S) (301).
7.00 Wish You Were Here? Mary Nightingale in Marrakech. Judith Chalmers on Fiji and Martin Roberts drives round Eric's most beautiful counties (S) (1059). *
7.30 Coronation Street. Grim news for Liz McDonald and au revoir Curly (S55). *
8.00 Now We're Talking. Phillip Schofield and celebs from both sides of the Atlantic talk about communication breakdown. You owe it to yourself to stay clear (S) (5721). *
9.00 Element of Doubt. See Pick of the Day (S) (5108).
11.00 News, Weather (175295). *
11.15 Local News, Weather (447924). *
12.25 Jeff Green: Live! The comedian recorded live at Her Majesty's Theatre in London (S) (41672).
12.10 The Beatles Anthology. The mop-top film *Let It Be*, jam on top of Apple's London offices, and decided to call it a day (R) (S) (4121948). *
1.10 Nationwide Football League Extra (7155412). *
1.55 Fade Away. Bonnie Tyler's desert island disc - who includes Tina Turner, Bryan Adams and Meat Loaf. Someone has to... (S) (6401764). *
2.55 Licence to Drive (Greg Beaman 1988 US). Teenager Guy Hallin promises the girl of his dreams he will take her out in his grandfather's treasured car - deciding he's just failed his driving test. Ho, ho, ho (S) (911330). *
4.30 Realising the Dream. Jazz (S) (996528). *
5.05 Furry Business (R) (S) (113651). *
5.30 James Bond Jr (R) (116238). *
5.55 News (1119325). To 6.00am.

ITV/London

- 6.00 GMTV (7330769). 9.25 Santa Buglio (465740). 9.50 Step by Step (2228837). 10.20 News (3114450). 10.25 Local News (3113721). *
10.30 Black Beauty (James Hill 1971 UK/Sov. Ger.). Anna Sewall's child-and-horse classic given a cursory run-around with Mark Lester as the dusky nag's young owner. Patrick Mower is in there somewhere (60177189). *
12.20 Your Show (2276063). 12.25 Local News (3626504). 12.30 News (5156214). 12.55 Local News (5131905).
1.25 The First Great Train Robbery (Michael Crichton 1978 US). Seven G-men and Donald Sutherland plan to rob a British Army payroll train during the Crimean War in this attempt to recreate the *Butch Cassidy* and the *Sundance Kid* mixture of comedy and excitement (S) (58191672). *
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5.55 News (1119325). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

- 6.20 Sesame Street (2580092). 7.15 The Babybushes (2580092). 7.50 Shunt Dogs (5542818). 8.15 Little Shop (R) (7450111). *
8.35 Where on Earth is Carmen San Diego? (647824). *
9.00 The Big Breakfast (54740).
10.00 Hangin' with Mr Cooper (R) (S) (55276). *
10.30 The Crystal Maze (R) (S) (77092). *
11.30 Back to the Future (R) (S) (6208130). *
11.55 The Pink Panther (R) (S) (6208130). *
12.20 God in the Heavens. Saving Christmas (5647419). *
12.50 Twist (Robin Mann 1992 Can.). Documentary about the dance craze that swept early 1960s America (4361905). *
2.20 Silk Stockings (Rouben Mamoulian 1957 US). A stiff, to say the least, version of the Cole Porter Broadway musical based on the 1939 Greta Garbo film *Ninotchka*. Leggy Cyd Charisse is the KGB agent sent to stop a Russian composer in self-imposed exile Paris who has agreed to write musicals for Hollywood. Then she finds herself falling for the playboy producer of the movie, played by John Hodiak and Jules Munshin are in the supporting cast. But all the actors might just as well have been in a bad mood (82155585). *
4.30 Countdown (2580092). 5.00 American Football (2580092). (S) (85189). *
6.30 Hollywood (2580092). *
7.00 News, Weather (432837). *
7.30 Just Dancing Around? The last in this series coupling film directors with contemporary dance choreographers is a pas de deux between director Mark Kidel and Richard Attenborough, veteran British modernist from the Ballet Rambert and London Contemporary Dance Theatre. Tal-Chai and Michael Cunningham are revealed as sources (S) (38127). *
8.30 A Woman of Independent Means. 1/3. Imported mini-series with a 70-year historical span and a cast by Sally Field, Brenda Ficker and Charles Durning. Based on the novel by Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey, it tells of a southern belle (Field) growing up with the 20th century. Part one takes us to World War One, and it all continues on New Year's Day (S) (6402924). *
10.10 Homicide: Life on the Street (S) (226498). *
11.10 Dealers. Jean-Luc Leaud's comic documentary centring on the relationship between three artists and their dealers (S) (513694). *
12.35 The G-Men (William Keighly 1935 US). Warner Brothers' gangster classic starring James Cagney as a tough-talking FBI agent who single-handedly takes the crime boss by the throat (S) (6402924). *
2.10 Inevitable Stripes (Lloyd Bacon 1940 US). Unemployed ex-con George Raft returns to a life of crime to prevent his younger brother making the same mistakes he did. Humphrey Bogart, William Holden and Jane Bryan are also involved in this morality tale (5629696). To 3.35am.

ITV/Regions

- As London except: 12.55pm Coronation Street (9131905). 3.30pm News and Weather (275585). 1.10pm Short Story Cinema (7767509). 1.40pm Football Extra (8104931). 2.25pm Film Life at the Top (158580). 4.25. 5.55pm Film: The Enchanted Forest (3945611).
As London except: 12.55pm A Country Practice (9131905). 1.25pm The Making of Star Trek: Beyond First Contact (7710837). 6.00pm Home and Away Special (685855). 4.55. 5.15pm Sound Bites (5677783).
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